

## Shirley Muir named Citizen of the Year



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As a former reporter and journalism instructor, Shirley Muir knows the importance of accurate spelling. As an enthusiastic community supporter, that skill is always with her, and she knows, there is no 'I' in team.

She's honoured to be named this year's Citizen of the Year, but upon learning of the

award, she made sure to acknowledge that good things happen not through the efforts of one, but the combined positive energy of many.

"I saw the list of previous recipients and to follow people like Ashley Monkman, Fraser Stewart and Michael Buhr is very, very humbling," Muir said.

"One of the first things I did after I was told about this honour was to put a sign on my home office door that says, 'Together we make one really good citizen'. It's a daily reminder that anything is possible when we're in it together, because this has been a group effort."

Muir will be recognized at the 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Citizen of the Year Award Banquet, which will be held Nov. 8 at the Selkirk Golf and Country Club and hosted by the Selkirk and District Community Foundation.

Muir has become synonymous with volunteering and is a natural-born motivator and leader. Her work ethic is amazing; commitment to community well known and her enthusiasm is contagious.

Her friend Patricia Foulis nominated Muir for the Citizen of the Year Award, and was candid in the fact that as a friend, you may know of the wonderful force that is Shirley Muir, but until you put together a nominating letter, you don't fully realize her impact.

She closed out her seven-page nomination letter with these thoughts: "Throughout this nomination process I have learned so much about my friend Shirley that I did not know...She is a very humble individual. She never forgets and strives to help the most vulnerable people in our society," Foulis wrote.

"Shirley has a way of mobilizing individuals for any cause she thinks will help improve or promote Selkirk and the surrounding area. She is no stranger to city hall,

appearing to speak on a number of issues. The main thing you never know about Shirley is, what's next?"

Indeed, Foulis' nomination letter touches on Muir's accomplishments, from personal to professional to community, and though there's plenty to devour in the nomination, it's likely not fully complete.

Foulis acknowledges that her friend will squirm at the recognition, and that she prefers to go about building community without any pats on the back or recognition.

"Shirley is always thinking of helping others. She rarely speaks about all the great things she is doing or has accomplished so I felt compelled this year to introduce her and honour those achievements through this nomination," Foulis wrote.

"I want everyone to know what an amazing, caring and influential individual she is and what she has done for our city and surrounding area."

Muir has a long history of volunteerism and has dedicated countless hours to helping in her chosen community of Selkirk, where she moved to 22 years ago with her husband George Stephenson and where they've raised their daughter, Kit.

Her community involvement spans 15 years, and includes work with Nova House, an Interlake women's shelter, co-chair of communications for the Manitoba Lotteries Western Canada Summer Games, held in four communities including Selkirk, founding member of Parents for French, Selkirk chapter, board member and chair of Twice Over, a second-hand store in support of Nova House, board member of the Selkirk and District Community Foundation, co-chair and founder of Homes for the Holidays and most recently, its offshoot, Holiday Alley.

And that's just the local stuff.

Muir is on the board of Manitoba Film and Music and the Manitoba Real Estate Association Shelter Foundation. In past years, she's sat on the boards of the Green Building Council, Manitoba Chapter, Red River College and was president of the Canadian Association of Journalists.

Her awards are many, and include a Manitoba Human Rights Award in 1993 for a TV series on Aboriginal life and healing, YM-YWCA Women of Distinction Award in 1995 for leadership and volunteer work in promoting women in communications, Canadian Human Rights Award in 1999 for creating the first call centre in a women's prison in Canada in Portage la Prairie, a 2001 WomenAction: United Nations Award recognizing best practices case in connecting girls and women with technology and a 2013 Wichilhewaywin Award that recognizes a non-aboriginal person who has made a lifetime contribution to Aboriginal education, to name a few.

For Muir, the community of Selkirk is home to many, some born here, some who've discovered its beauty and adopted it, who all have a dream of giving back and making their home town the best it can be.

"For every single thing I've been involved with in this region, there have been a dozen, two dozen or 10 dozen people involved too. That's the amazing thing about this community – there are people here with ideas and dreams and the drive to actually make them come true. What a perfect combination for a healthy community," she said.

"All you have to do is pick up the phone and say 'a few of us are thinking about doing this 'thing', would you like to be involved? And the answer is always 'yes'."

Congratulations to Shirley Muir, and all the others who say 'yes'.

For tickets to the Citizen of the Year Award Banquet contact the Selkirk & District Community Foundation office at 204-785-9755 or [selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca](mailto:selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca)