



Former SDCF Chair David Thorne and last year's Citizen of the Year, Elder Ruth Christie.

Nominations for the 40th Citizen of the Year now open

September means time to go back to school, time for leaves to change colour and time to think about nominating a deserving person for Citizen of the Year.

Nominations are open now but will close quickly on Oct. 1.

The Citizen of the Year Award recognizes an individual, who through their own initiative, ability and effort has made an exemplary achievement in the area of the RM of St. Andrews, RM of St. Clements and/or the City of Selkirk.

Last year's Citizen of the Year was Elder Ruth Christie, who learned of her award at the Oct. 5 Vital Signs Town Hall meeting at Memorial Hall. Christie was in attendance with about 100 others participating in the meeting when David Thorne, the Selkirk & District Community Foundation then-Chair, interrupted the proceedings with a phone call he'd received.

Thorne whispered in Executive Director Bev Clegg's ear and Clegg enthusiastically walked towards Christie.

“Ruth, I’ve got some news,” Clegg said.

“Elder Ruth Christie, you are the Citizen of the Year.”

For Christie, the honour was almost overwhelming.

“You make me want to live forever,” an emotional Christie said.

“Thank you. I really appreciate this, and I don’t know if I’m going to sleep tonight.”

For Thorne, Christie was a perfect fit for Citizen of the Year.

“Ruth's infectious laughter, smile and kindness brightens every room she enters,” he said.

“Her wisdom and strength make her truly deserving of the 2024 Citizen of the Year Award.”

Shirley Muir and Jacqueline Bercier nominated Christie for the award.

“It’s hard to know where to start. It seems like Elder Ruth Christie has been a part of my life for years. It’s been so long I frankly can’t remember how I even got introduced to her. It was likely something like this, “You want to understand Indigenous history and culture in this community? You need to talk to Ruth Christie,” Muir wrote in her nominating letter.

“And I know I’m not the only one who has found their way to her doorstep on the same path of learning, truth and reconciliation. Over the years I have, as have so many people in our community, come to rely on Ruth Christie as a teacher, mentor and guide. And even a shoulder to cry on.

“She has shared her wisdom and experience throughout this region and with people all over the world. And for that she has been recognized far and wide. It is long overdue to recognize her here.”

Bercier, an educator in the Lord Selkirk School Division, was enthusiastic in her nomination of Christie’s.

“I’ve known Elder Ruth Christie for over 20 years. She has been the unofficial guiding Elder for Lord Selkirk School Division for longer than that. She has mentored many teachers, and her wisdom and stories have helped us progress on an intentional and positive path in our commitment to reconciliation. Ruth has also been an esteemed Elder for Promoting Aboriginal Student Success (PASS) since its inception in 2000. She has worked with our young people in various workshops, lending her knowledge to the next generation,” Bercier wrote.

“Ruth is someone that I have looked up to the entire time I have known her. She has this incredibly kind, gentle strength about her and her stories about her life, and the historical knowledge about the area is what I aspire to be like. Ruth has impacted this community in so many ways, we are forever fortunate that she is part of this community. Her knowledge is invaluable, and she should be honoured for all that she has given to the community.”

Nominators should explain how the individual you are nominating has made the community a better place to live and work; provide a detailed account of the individual’s volunteer contributions and/or professional accomplishments, as they relate to the community; and describe how the individual’s actions have impacted and helped the community. Nominees must live in the community.

Written nominations are welcome from any individual, organization, business, association or institution and can be dropped off at the Selkirk & District Community Foundation office at 200 Eaton Ave., to the attention of the Citizen of the Year Selection Committee, or e-mailed to exdirector@sdfc.ca

For more information, contact 204-785-9755 or email selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca

Details on how to nominate can be found online at sdcf.ca.

Deadline to nominate is Wednesday, Oct. 1.