

Elder Albert Marshall, HonDLitt - Mi'kmaw Nation

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Elder Albert Marshall is from the Moose Clan of the Mi'kmaw Nation; he lives in the community of Eskasoni in Unama'ki – Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Albert is a fluent speaker of the Mi'kmaw language, a passionate advocate of cross-cultural understandings and healing and of our human responsibilities to care for all creatures and our Earth Mother, and the “designated voice” for the Mi'kmaw Elders of Unama'ki with respect to environmental issues. He is the spouse of Murdena Marshall, the father of six children, the grandfather or great grandfather for many more, and a friend to thousands.

In 2009, Albert along with his wife Murdena were conferred the degree Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* by Cape Breton University (CBU) for their tireless efforts to help promote Mi'kmaw culture and language along with cross-cultural understandings, reconciliation, and healing. Together, they have developed KECCA (Knowledge Education & Culture Consultant Associates) to better enable their work and to encourage a strong future for the Mi'kmaw Nation and its peoples.

Elders Albert and Murdena are strong advocates for "*Etuaptmumk / Two-Eyed Seeing*", a phrase that Albert coined for the gift of multiple perspectives and that they encourage be used as a guiding principle for the co-learning journey of different cultural knowledges working together. It encourages that we learn to see from our one eye with the best in (or strengths of) the Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and learn to see from the our other eye with the best in (or strengths of) the Western/mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing ... and, moreover, that we learn to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. Albert's advocacy for Two-Eyed Seeing and his deep passion for sharing Mi'kmaw Traditional Knowledge have seen him speak coast to coast to coast within Canada, as well as internationally. And thus, the message of Two-Eyed Seeing has been picked up by many others working in a diversity of arenas of application; it also helped guide global science celebrations for the International Year of Astronomy 2009. In October 2011, Elders Albert and Murdena highlighted the message of Two-Eyed Seeing at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's National Atlantic Event in Halifax, NS.

In the 1990's, Elders Albert and Murdena were instrumental in the conception and development of the radically innovative and globally unique Integrative Science program at CBU. They stayed with that effort through the entire first decade of the 2000s and over the years welcomed many students and associated faculty or researchers to their home in Eskasoni First Nation. They also have done and continue to do the same for other programs and other institutions. Albert was also specifically involved with the BEAHR (Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources) program while it was being taught by the Nova Scotia Community College. Indeed, Albert's words figured prominently on the Student Training Manual: *“So this is what we truly believe. This is what reinforces our spiritualities: that no one being is greater than the next, that we are part and parcel of the whole, we are equal, and that each one of us has a responsibility to the balance of the system”*.

Elder Albert is a member of the Advisory Committee for the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCA) headquartered at the University of Northern British Columbia and of the Advisory Council for Unama'ki College of Cape Breton University. He also sits on or interacts with numerous local to national committees that help guide collaborative initiatives in natural resource management, that serve First Nations' governance issues, that work towards ethical environmental, social and economic practices, or that otherwise strive to include Traditional Knowledges and ways of knowing. In 2009, Albert was awarded the Marshall Award for Aboriginal Leadership as part of the Eco-Hero Awards delivered by the NS Environmental Network (an umbrella organization of provincial environmental and health organizations). Elder Albert was a strong voice in the many years of grassroots effort in Cape Breton that successfully saw the Bras d'Or Lake and its watershed be designated a United Nations biosphere reserve in 2011, and he remains active within the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association. Furthermore, he has been and is the Elder Advisor within years and years of work towards ecosystem stewardship for the Bras d'Or Lake in conjunction with formal efforts by the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) and the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) ... but he was also active in that regard long before either of those organizations came into existence.

During 2010-2011, Albert was a key participant among 23 Elders from Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqiyik, Innu, and Inuit communities and territories in Atlantic Canada who worked together within the "Honouring Traditional Knowledge" research project of the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program within the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs. Elders brought forward Eight Recommendations as to how they wished to be consulted and see Traditional Knowledge included in Aboriginal community economic development projects and research, as well as in all aspects of education, health, law, environment, etc. The Elders' recommendations were subsequently reviewed and supported through consensus by the Atlantic Chiefs in September 2011.

Albert was born in 1938 in Eskasoni, Unama'ki-Cape Breton. As a young boy, he was taken away from his family and spent many years as an inmate of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School on the mainland of Nova Scotia. Albert was profoundly affected by this experience but today seldom talks about those many painful and traumatic years. Rather, the experience has led him on a lifelong quest to connect with and understand both the culture he was removed from, and the culture he was forced into ... and to help these cultures find ways to live in mutual respect of each other's strengths and ways. And thus, now in his later adult years, one of Albert's greatest passions has become his advocacy for Two-Eyed Seeing. He suggests that Two-Eyed Seeing emerged in Atlantic Canada - the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaw Nation - because Mi'kmaw are the Aboriginal people of North America who have had the longest experience of living side-by-side with the new comers from Europe. It is through Elder Albert's work that Two-Eyed Seeing has come to be embraced within diverse projects of local to international scope wherein there is a desire for Indigenous and mainstream ways of knowing and knowledges to work together ... for the benefit of all.