LOUISE ARBOUR
*Crimes against Humanity*
*Born in Montreal, Quebec*
*Lives in Montreal, Quebec*

Louise Arbour has always been drawn to help the marginalized. As Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, she worked tirelessly to ensure that rape was recognized as a war crime, secured the first conviction for genocide since 1948 (Rwanda) and the first-ever indictment for war crimes by a sitting European head of state (former Serbian president Slobodan Milošević).

“I think of it as a chain. You know, we’re each one a link, and all that’s expected of you is not to be that weak one that’s going to make it all fall apart. If you can at least do that much, you’ve made your contribution.”

Arbour is the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and the Court of Appeal for Ontario, a Companion of the Order of Canada and the author of *War Crimes and the Culture of Peace*. Arbour was first exposed to the kinds of social issues that would shape her career when she left her French community to attend law school, which she says encouraged her to think critically and investigate the cases of those who had otherwise been ignored.

REMZI CEJ
*Displacement to Activism*
*Born in Kosovo*
*Lives in St. John’s, Newfoundland*

At the age of 15, Remzi Cej fled the conflict in his home country of Kosovo with his parents and spent 18 months in Albanian refugee camps before coming to Canada in 2000. When Cej arrived in Canada, the 17-year-old immediately became deeply involved in human rights and social justice work, focusing on violence against women, human trafficking, refugees and discrimination based on sexual orientation or
religious and ethnic belonging. For five years, his family had no word of his older brother Adnan, who is deaf. In 2004 they finally discovered he was alive and living in Turkey and brought him to Canada.

“I try to mobilize individuals for activism, because I think someday I might somehow lose this memory [of Kosovo]. I don’t want it to go away, because it’s one of the only things that pushes me.”

Named chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission at the age of 28, Cej was also one of the youngest recipients of the YMCA Peace Medal for Human Rights Education (2002) – one of his many awards. He speaks seven languages.

LÉONIE COUTURE
Women’s Safety
Born in Saint-Georges, Quebec
Lives in Montreal, Quebec

Léonie Couture grew up in a time where violence was often an answer to individual and collective stressors. This led her to dedicate her life to advocacy for women’s rights – particularly for women who were broken from the inside out as a result of trauma, violence, abuse and rejection. In 1994, she founded the organisation “La Rue des Femmes” (Herstreet), which empowers women to reclaim themselves as worthy individuals. La Rue des Femmes propose une approche innovatrice, centrée sur la santé relationnelle.

For Couture, “the very notion of human rights becomes null and void when an individual, man or woman, is unable to connect with oneself and others. This vital capacity to connect with oneself and others is precisely what defines relational health.”

Thanks to Léonie Couture’s vision, over 450 homeless women benefited from the support of Herstreet in 2014-2015, which helped them reclaim their lives and relational health.

JEREMY DIAS
Gender and Sexual Diversity
Born in Edmonton, Alberta
Lives in Ottawa, Ontario

For Jeremy Dias, growing up had its challenges. The son of immigrant parents, Dias was one of a small group of non-white students at his school. Dias is also gay, which resulted in intense periods of bullying and isolation during his education.

“I asked for help. I cried a lot. I went to therapy. I went back to therapy. I read books. I listened to music. I read more books. I went back to therapy. I asked for help... Everything all worked out. Because it worked out for me, I have an obligation to help other people who it’s not working out for.”
As a high school student, Dias took the Algoma District School board to court for human rights violations, alleging that his Ontario school would not let him start a gay social club. After an extensive court battle, Dias won the second largest human rights settlement ever awarded. He used the money to fund “Jer’s Vision,” now known as the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, an organisation that fights homophobia and bullying in schools.

RICK HANSEN
Accessibility for All
Born in Port Alberni, British Columbia
Lives in Steveston, British Columbia

Athlete and philanthropist Rick Hansen became paralyzed from the legs down after a pick-up truck caused him a spinal cord injury when he was just 15 years old. As a young athlete, the injury was particularly devastating for him, but he was determined to prove that disability did not mean incapability.

“I had to really dig deep and understand that you can have pain or suffering or a physical disability and still be whole as a human being... you can still have love and receive love and have meaning and purpose, still do all the things that you do in life and do it in a different way.”

Undeterred, Hansen went on to be the first graduate of physical education at the University of British Columbia with a disability. In 1985 he attracted international attention with his “Man in Motion Tour” wherein he circled the world on his wheelchair, crossing four continents and raising $26 million for spinal cord research. He has been inducted into the Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame and his experience has been a beacon of light for thousands of disabled Canadians—proof that they can achieve their goals.

DR. GILLES JULIEN
Children’s Health and Wellness
Born in Grand-Mère, Quebec
Lives in Montreal, Quebec

When Dr. Gilles Julien began to volunteer in his home town of Grand-Mère he became increasingly aware of the effects of poverty on health. He saw that members of his community were being improperly treated for their ailments, because the root of their problem was entrenched in their ongoing “social misery.”

“You have to understand people but the system judges so quickly. When you are excluded from the mainstream, you lose everything. We need to change that.”
Julien advocated for community-driven social pediatrics and in so doing revolutionized Canadian healthcare. His pediatric model fosters the healthy growth and development of all children, by assessing their environmental and family conditions. A pediatrics practitioner for over 40 years, Julien is the Director of the European Society for Social Pediatrics and is a member of the Club de Pédiatrie Sociale.

WILTON LITTLECHILD
*Truth and Reconciliation*
*Born in Maskwacis, Alberta*
*Lives in Maskwacis, Alberta*

When he was only 6 years old, Wilton Littlechild was taken away from his grandparents on the Maskwacis First Nation and forced to attend a residential school. Over the course of the next 14 years, himself and his peers were subject to profound emotional and sexual abuse at the hands of their teachers.

*“It was about taking the Indian out of the child: it was about assimilation.”*

Littlechild, a member of the Ermineskin Cree Nation, is now a Cree Chief, lawyer and former Conservative Member of Parliament. Inspired by the strength of his classmates in the face of great adversity, he studied Physical Education at the University of Alberta and Law at the University of New Mexico. In 1976, he was the first Treaty person in Canada to graduate from a Faculty of Law. In 2007, the University of Alberta awarded him with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

Littlechild went on to found the International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development, a NGO that is part of the United Nations. He is also a Commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and has spent the last several years traveling across the country, gathering stories of residential school abuse from his fellow Indigenous people. In addition, he sits on the board of trustees of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

ARTHUR MIKI
*Equality and Redress*
*Born in Vancouver, British Columbia*
*Lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba*

Born in Vancouver in 1936, Art Miki was five years old when his parents and grandparents moved from Vancouver to a cramped home on a sugar beet farm in Ste. Agathe, a French-speaking community south of Winnipeg. It wasn’t until he was in his 20s that Miki understood that the move had been a forced relocation, and that he and his family were some of the 22,000 people affected by the wartime internment of Japanese-Canadians.
“Many British Columbians began to say, ‘We’ve got to get rid of these Japanese. They’re taking over. They’re taking over these different areas.’ So as a result, when the war came, it became a good excuse to remove the Japanese.”

Miki fought long and hard for a formal acknowledgment and apology from the government of Canada (which came in 1988) and for the compensation of the loss of civil rights (confiscated properties) to be awarded to the Japanese-Canadians who were interned during the war. He became the President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians in 1984 and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 1991.

TIMEA NAGY
Human Trafficking
Born in Hungary
Lives in Ontario

Timea Nagy came to Canada from Hungary at the age of 20 intending to do some domestic work abroad, but when she arrived she found herself forced into the sex trade, unable to escape for several months. With the help of some friends and the local police, she eventually plotted a path to freedom and slowly began to rebuild her life.

“There’s nothing you can do to change the past. But you can do everything to change the future.”

As a survivor of human trafficking, Nagy has founded the organisation Walk with Me Canada Victim Services to rescue those currently involved in human trafficking and to offer survivors counselling and rehabilitation. She has won numerous awards for her work, including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012) and the Frederick Douglas Award (2012).

ROSEMARY SADLIER
Human Dignity
Born in Toronto, Ontario
Lives in Toronto, Ontario

As a child, Rosemary Sadlier was once asked by a friend what country her Black father had come from. The innocent question struck a chord with her dad, whose ancestors immigrated to Canada in 1783.

“There was a sense that the people who are supposed to be doing the helping are supposed to be white, and the people who are supposed to be helped are supposed to be everybody else.”

Sadlier is now an advocate for the rights of Black Canadians and has been the President of the Ontario Black History Society since 1993. She was largely responsible for the implementation of Black History Month as a national celebration in Canada and is the author of Harriet Tubman: freedom seeker,
freedom leader, Mary Ann Shadd, The Kids Book of Black Canadian history and The Only One. Sadlier was raised in Toronto where she continues to live and work.

MARY SIMON
Cultural Identity and Education
Born in Kangiqsualujjuaq, Nunavik, Quebec
Lives in Ottawa, Ontario

Growing up in Nunavik, Mary Simon was forbidden from speaking her mother-tongue of Inuktitut at the school she attended and students who disobeyed were punished. In adulthood, she began to speak out against the many inequalities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

“It’s not about me or you. It’s just about finally having some kind of recognition that our people are a people.”

Simon has been a producer for CBC North, former President of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, as well as acting as the secretary for the board of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association from 1976-1978. She was Canada’s first Ambassador of Circumpolar Affairs and served as an ambassador to Denmark. Exceedingly active on issues of Northern affairs, Simon was one of the senior Inuit negotiators during the repatriation of the Canadian Constitution and during the 1992 Charlottetown Accord discussions.

KARIHWAKERON TIM THOMPSON
Equitable Education for All
Born in Wahta Mohawk Territory, Ontario
Lives in Wahta Mohawk Territory, Ontario

It was in school that Karihwakeron Tim Thompson first encountered the history of his ancestors, and he didn’t like what he found. Their only mention in his history textbook was a graphic description of the Mohawk people torturing European fur trader Pierre Infinity Radisson. Thompson knew this wasn’t the whole story.

“Education is the one place where we can make great strides: not only in affirming a positive sense of self-image for our young people, but also to create understanding with everyone else who lives here.”

Now an advocate for Indigenous education, Thompson is the former President of the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI), an Ontario-based First Nation owned college. It’s there he worked to establish international relationships with Indigenous educators in Chile, Ecuador, and with the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium. Karihwakeron is President of the Hiawatha Institute for Indigenous Knowledge and serves on the Wahta Community Trust. He continues to share policy advice and guidance to First Nations. He provides Indigenous awareness training and has worked with the
Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres to create more urban-based First Nations schools that focus on First Nations issues and cultural education, with the hope of encouraging government change. He continues to campaign for an increased focus on the First Nations cultural identity in the school system.