



## Tribute To An Outstanding Indigenous Educator

This tribute recognizes the important contributions of Indigenous educators in Canadian public schools.

# Elder Opolahsomuwehs, Dr. Imelda Perley

*Nominated by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA)*

Elder Opolahsomuwehs, Dr. Imelda Perley, C.M., is a Wolastoqew Elder, linguist, and educator whose lifelong dedication to Indigenous education has left an enduring mark on students, teachers, and communities across Canada. Dr. Perley has devoted her career to ensuring that Wolastoqey language, culture, and knowledge are not only preserved but celebrated within educational systems at every level. As Elder-in-Residence at the University of New Brunswick's Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre, she co-created the Wabanaki Bachelor of Education—a landmark program that prepares teachers to educate through an Indigenous lens and to honour the histories and peoples of this land. Her advocacy directly contributed to amendments to New Brunswick's Education Act, making Indigenous content mandatory across the provincial K-12 curriculum, benefitting every student in the English-language school system.

A gifted linguist and tireless language revitalization champion, Dr. Perley has taught Wolastoqey in First Nations schools, public schools, and universities, and has shared the gift of spirit names with more than 200 children, weaving cultural continuity into the next generation. Her innovative approaches—from language apps to daily teachings on X (Twitter)—have brought Wolastoqey to learners across generations and borders.

A Member of the Order of Canada and recipient of the Governor General's Sovereign Medal for Volunteers, Dr. Perley reminds us that education, at its most powerful, is an act of love for those who come after us. Woliwon.