

For immediate release

Four Community Champions Honoured by QCGN

Work of Sen. Joan Fraser, Josh Freed, Martin Murphy, Joshua Arless to be celebrated

MONTREAL, October 8, 2019 – Their fields of accomplishment vary widely, but four champions of Quebec’s English-speaking community being formally honoured with **Community Leadership Awards** by the Quebec Community Groups Network share important qualities in equal amounts: dedication and persistence.

Senator and longtime journalist **Joan Fraser**, commentator and humourist **Josh Freed**, and community advocate **Martin Murphy** have won QCGN’s 11th annual Sheila and Victor Goldbloom Community Service Award. **Joshua Arless**, a barrier-breaking school commissioner, has been chosen for the fifth annual Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award.

“Each leader chosen has in their own way added to the vitality of English-speaking Quebec in an exemplary fashion,” QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers said. “Each has taken an inspirational path that has helped advance our collective cause and move us toward the greater good.”

Sen. Joan Fraser has made a double-barreled impact. The first was throughout her forceful 33-year journalism career, most notably many years as a no-nonsense leader at The Montreal Gazette where she proved equally eloquent in print and in person. She moved to the political realm in 1998, a fearless dynamo and proponent of minority language rights in the Senate of Canada until she retired last year. More recently, she has rallied to the defence of imperiled English school boards in Quebec. Her work has both embodied and helped to entrench the distinct bicultural core that makes our nation so remarkable. She has helped build a more resilient, enduring and accommodating Canada.

Josh Freed does far more than simply poke fun. None would dare dispute his unquestionable mastery of that most challenging of vocations, humourist. Usually with gentle but whenever necessary with a cutting edge, Freed has for decades illuminated, explained, celebrated and bemoaned the daily challenges that dog English-language life in Quebec. His perceptive insights resonate far beyond our community, proving persuasive for those on the other side of the traditional solitudes line. In addition to his Saturday Gazette column, Freed’s body of work includes seven books and dozens of documentary films. He has consistently brought Quebecers of all origins together with wit and warmth.

A gentleman with unswerving commitment to service, **Martin Murphy** has long been a spirited and adroit advocate for social justice. Driven always by his strong sense of duty, he has advanced core community causes including better conditions for our teachers; greater access in English to our health and social services; and the successful conclusion of stormy negotiations with the federal government to ensure equitable funding. He has also quietly served as something of a godfather for the QCGN throughout its 24-year history. Murphy has proven particularly adept at keeping the development and vitality of our many smaller and more fragile English-speaking communities – dotted across Quebec’s many regions – at the forefront of our collective focus.

Joshua Arless has already spent much of his life breaking barriers and smashing stereotypes. Seven years after graduating high school, Arless was elected in fall 2014 as a Lester B. Pearson School Board councillor. He represents Dorval and Lachine, on the West Island of Montreal. He is quiet-spoken, astute and thoughtful. Arless is also gay. He was vice-chair of the Central Student Committee at Lakeside Academy and served for five years as executive producer of TOPS: Performance Education, which nurtures and showcases arts education outside the typical classroom environment. Active in politics, Arless is determined to ensure that LGBTQ rights are fully recognized and respected throughout the education system.

The QCGN launched its Community Leadership Awards in 2009 with the creation of the Goldbloom Award which honours individuals who have gone above and beyond in contributing to the vitality and reputation of the English-speaking community and who have built bridges of understanding between Quebecers of diverse backgrounds. The Young Quebecers Leading the Way Award was created in 2015 by QCGN, CBC Quebec and the Fondation Notre Home Foundation to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding achievements of English-speaking Quebecers under the age of 30.

Our winners have been invited to receive their awards at a community celebration Wednesday, Nov. 6, at Montreal’s prestigious St-James Club. Co-sponsored by the Fondation Notre Home Foundation, the evening will be emceed by Jamie Orchard, head anchor of Global Montreal. Details and tickets can be found [here](#).

The Quebec Community Groups Network (www.qcgn.ca) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 60 English-language community organizations across Quebec. As a centre of evidence-based expertise and collective action it identifies, explores and addresses strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of the English-speaking community of Quebec and encourages dialogue and collaboration among its member organizations, individuals, community groups, institutions and leaders.

For further information:

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