

TRANSFORMING LIVES

2016 YWCA TORONTO WOMEN OF DISTINCTION



ROBERTA L. JAMIESON

President's Award

President and CEO of Indspire



In this year of Truth and Reconciliation, YWCA Toronto is proud to bestow the President's Award to intrepid First Nations leader Roberta Jamieson, CEO of Indspire, an Indigenous-led charity advancing Indigenous achievement through education and training. A Mohawk from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario, Roberta is in her fifth decade of inspiring and initiating positive change for her people and for Canada.

Roberta has broken barriers as she became the first First Nations woman law school graduate in Canada; first woman Ombudsman of Ontario and first woman elected Chief of Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. The Commissioner of the Indian Commission of Ontario from 1985 to 1989, she was the first non-Parliamentarian to sit on a House of Commons committee – a committee studying Indian self-government. Roberta has earned a litany of awards, including an Order of Canada and 24 honorary degrees.

Roberta is well known as an authority on non-adversarial methods for conflict resolution, applying her Mohawk traditional values. She received the International Association for Conflict Resolution's Mary Parker Follet Award in 1992 for her work in developing and promoting alternative dispute resolution methods. She is also a strong advocate for making room for diversity in Canada's institutions and Canadians' daily lives. In 2002, she was the Recipient of the first Deo Kernahan Memorial Award presented by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations in Toronto.

Roberta is not interested in plaudits for her past achievements. She is too busy advocating for what she described in a recent speech as "a Canada where there are no murdered Indigenous women ... a Canada without Indigenous poverty, a Canada where there is no crisis in Indigenous health or Indigenous education, or Indigenous incarceration."

It is this kind of personal history and relentless effort that is required to create a fairer, more equitable, country.



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