

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Canada's History Society Announces 2024 Recipients of the
John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada**

Three organizations to receive \$50,000 each for projects that share the stories of inspiring people who have shaped Atlantic Canadian history and society.

October 7, 2024 — A Mi'kmaq chief who was posthumously pardoned for defending his treaty right to hunt out of season. A priest who founded the University of Moncton and promoted the study of Acadian culture. A Black activist, who, along with other African Nova Scotians, experienced setbacks and triumphs in the struggle against racism and poverty during the civil rights movement.

The stories of these Canadians will be celebrated and shared thanks to the John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada. The award is a granting program made possible by the River Philip Foundation, which promotes and preserves the histories of people who left a lasting legacy in communities in the region.

“So much of Canada’s history is shaped by the passion and dedication of local community members,” said Melony Ward, President and CEO of Canada’s National History Society. “The generous funding of the John Bragg Award supports communities in promoting these important histories and remembering the individuals who made them possible.”

“This award contributes to innovative, community-focused projects that breathe new life into the stories of inspiring leaders in Atlantic Canada,” said John Bragg on behalf of the River Philip Foundation. “By recognizing and honouring the contributions of these history-makers, we can inspire new generations to make a positive impact in their community’s future.”

Each of the recipients’ projects aims to expand knowledge and increase public awareness of key leaders in their communities. The 2024 recipients are:

- *The Home of Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy*, a community event and video developed by We’koqma’q First Nation, We’koqma’q, Nova Scotia
- *L’épopée urbaine acadienne*, an interactive website created by Monument for Recognition in the 21st Century (MR21), Moncton, New Brunswick
- *Keeping up with the Joneses*, a new theatrical play written by Andrew Craig with support from Neptune Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Each organization will receive \$50,000 to carry out its initiative.

Letters of intent are now being accepted for the 2025 award.

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About the John Bragg Award

The John Bragg Award was launched in 2022/2023 to support projects that conserve and promote the history of individuals who have had a significant impact on communities in Atlantic Canada. The award is administered by Canada's National History Society, with the support of the River Philip Foundation.

CanadasHistory.ca/BraggAward

About Canada's National History Society

Canada's History Society is a national charitable organization that seeks to encourage Canadians to engage more deeply with their country's past. It shares the stories behind the history through its magazines, *Canada's History* and *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, digitally at CanadasHistory.ca, as well as through education and award programs, including the Governor General's History Awards. Canada's History Society believes all Canadians should see themselves reflected in its publications and programs.

CanadasHistory.ca

About the River Philip Foundation

Named for the waterway in Nova Scotia's Oxford County, the River Philip Foundation focuses on grants and funding for initiatives addressing poverty, supporting at-risk youth, education programs, community infrastructure projects, and enriching Canadian culture through performing and visual arts. Additionally, the foundation is committed to funding transformative medical research at Canadian universities and medical schools.

RiverPhilipFoundation.ca

BACKGROUND

John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada Recipients 2024

The Home of Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy

We'koqma'q First Nation, We'koqma'q, Nova Scotia

In 1927 Grand Chief Sylliboy was charged with hunting muskrat out of season. The legal system did not recognize his treaty right to hunt and convicted him. In 2017 the Nova Scotia government issued a formal apology and pardon for his conviction. Sylliboy's pursuit of justice was a pivotal event in the history of Canada-Mi'kmaq relations and the recognition of treaty rights. The Home of Grand Chief Gabriel Sylliboy is committed to preserving Sylliboy's historical legacy by listening to Elders and descendants and sharing his story through a community event and short film.

We'koqma'q First Nation nourishes its Mi'kmaw language and culture, and empowers community members by providing opportunities for education, employment, and economic growth. We'koqma'q provides a safe community that prioritizes the protection of natural resources, cultural values, and the well-being of the community.

L'épopée urbaine acadienne

Monument de la Reconnaissance au 21e siècle (MR21), Moncton, New Brunswick

Considered by his peers to be the greatest Acadian educator of modern times, Father Clément Cormier founded the University of Moncton in 1963, as well as the university's Acadian Museum and the Centre for Acadian Studies. He was a driving force in promoting the vitality of Acadian language and culture in Moncton and Atlantic Canada more broadly. *L'épopée urbaine acadienne (The Acadian Urban Epic)* will be an interactive website documenting the economic, political, and cultural life of Moncton's francophone community from the end of the 19th century until the construction of the University of Moncton in 1963. The website will draw on archival sources and previously unpublished interviews to highlight Father Clément Cormier's life and legacy in Moncton.

MR21 is a secular non-profit organization that digitally shares the stories and architectural treasures of the Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption Cathedral. *L'épopée urbaine acadienne* project seeks to demonstrate the unique vitality of Acadia culture at the heart of Moncton's community.

Keeping up with the Joneses

Neptune Theatre, Halifax, Nova Scotia

This new theatrical production written by Andrew Craig will centre on three advocates for the rights of African Nova Scotians in the 1960s: Rocky Jones, Joan Jones, and Walter Borden. Despite RCMP attempts to suppress their activism, Borden and the Joneses contributed to tangible changes in policy and legislation in the province. Their story offers a critical perspective on Canadian race relations and remains a source of inspiration for Black Nova Scotians. *Keeping up with the Joneses* is informed by collaboration with the Africville Museum and the Black Cultural Centre, as well as with local organizations and community leaders.

Neptune Theatre is committed to enriching and inspiring its community with vibrant theatre productions that foster creativity, promote inclusivity, and provide exceptional entertainment and educational experiences. Neptune engages in outreach programs, educational initiatives, and strategic partnerships to cultivate a love for theatre among individuals of diverse ages and backgrounds.

John Bragg Award for Atlantic Canada Recipients 2023

The Rosemary Eaton Legacy Project

Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society, Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia

Rosemary Eaton was an immigrant to Cole Harbour and an established photojournalist who shared her passions for photography, environmentalism, and heritage preservation with her adopted community. She was a founding member of the Cole Harbour Rural Heritage Society, playing an essential role in documenting the community's heritage and conserving its natural environment. The Rosemary Eaton Legacy Project led to the creation of an outdoor classroom, completed in July of 2024, and a series of educational panels using Eaton's photography to inspire environmental awareness.

Father Belcourt: Missionary, Educator, Visionary, Fighter for Human Rights

Friends of the Farmers' Bank of Rustico Inc., Rustico, Prince Edward Island

Father Georges-Antoine Belcourt worked to empower the Acadian community of Rustico by establishing the Catholic Institute to promote self-help ideas and a model school to provide education for young men. Belcourt also created the Farmers' Bank of Rustico, a precursor to modern credit unions. The project developed an educational booklet titled *Father Belcourt: Missionary, Educator, Visionary, Fighter for Human Rights* to tell the story of this influential Jesuit priest and missionary. Project team members worked with researchers and educators to create bilingual EduKits for distribution to P.E.I. schools.

The Nazaire Dugas Project

Nordais Collectif, Tracadie, New Brunswick

Nazaire Dugas, New Brunswick's first Acadian professional architect, designed major buildings in the Acadian Peninsula such as colleges, churches, and hotels, as well as many residences. Architecture is the oldest form of Acadian art that survives today, and Dugas's work from the early 1900s has had a lasting impact on the built environment of the region. The Nazaire Dugas Project documented and preserved Dugas's designs and notes. An artists' residency planned for fall 2024 will invite up to five creators in a variety of disciplines to produce a work based on Dugas's designs. The photos, transcriptions, plans, 3D models, and artworks produced from this process are to be used in a travelling exhibit.