

## **Carole Geller Human Rights Award**

### **Kanahus Manuel and Tiny House Warriors Receive Human Rights Award**

(Blue River, British Columbia) On November 9, 2021, Kanahus Manuel and the Tiny House Warriors were awarded the Carole Geller Human Rights Award for their role as Secwépemc land defenders, taking action to protect their unceded lands - Secwepemcúíecw. The Tiny House Warriors are a group of Indigenous women leaders who, under the authority of Secwépemc law, have been building tiny houses along the 518km Trans Mountain pipeline route, as a way to stop the pipeline, which poses serious risks to the health, safety and well-being of Secwépemc lands, waters and people – especially women and girls.

The Carole Geller Award is given periodically to an individual or group that is involved in a particularly important human rights struggle. The award is intended to assist recipients in their continued work in organizing for social justice and human rights and is named for Carole Geller - one of Canada's pioneers in advancing the cause of human rights.

Carole Geller began her work in the human rights field in 1967 when she was the President of the Manitoba Voice of Women. She became the first Director of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in 1973, where she promoted stronger human rights protections, affirmative action policies, and equal pay for work of equal value. In 1985 Ms. Geller became the first Executive Director of Manitoba's Pay Equity Bureau. Ms. Geller died of cancer in November 1987 and this award was started in her honour. This is the seventh time the award has been given.

“Carole, who was a lifelong feminist and worked closely with Indigenous peoples on human rights issues, would have been excited by these amazing Indigenous women and their creative

and courageous resistance work. She would applaud this award," said Kathleen Ruff, an Award Committee member.

"This is a pivotal moment in the history of Indigenous peoples and of Canada," said Shelagh Day, speaking for the Award Committee. "The Tiny House Warriors are defending Indigenous rights and sovereignty, the land and its resources, and the rights of Indigenous women to be safe from male violence. They are also bringing to the attention of all Canadians that respect for fundamental human rights for Indigenous peoples is at stake in the fight over pipelines."

The Secwépmc have never given their free, prior, and informed consent to the Trans Mountain Pipeline Project, as required under Secwépmc law and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The Tiny House Warriors are also determined to protect Indigenous women and girls from the known dangers of man camps which are under construction on their territory. The plan for the area includes a camp for 550 men, and the driveway into this camp is currently being built directly in front of their tiny houses.

Kanahus Manuel and the other Tiny House Warriors are experiencing surveillance, harassment, violence, and criminalization for their defence of human rights. It is critical to not only recognize their struggle and their important human rights work, but also support them financially as the criminalization of human rights defenders comes with significant legal costs.

Further information about the Carole Geller Human Rights Award can be found here:

<https://povertyandhumanrights.org/2021/11/the-carole-geller-award/>

For further information, contact Award Committee Members:

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