

## **Audreen Hourie: Cultural Educator and Patriot. (b. 1943)**

Audreen Hourie is a Métis, born in the Métis community of Grand Marais, Manitoba, on the southeast side of Lake Winnipeg. Audreen was a founding board member of Pemmican Publications (1980), and became Managing Editor in March 2000. She retired from this position in June of 2004. She had previously worked for the Manitoba Métis

Audreen at the *Ka Ni Kanichihk* presentation of the “Keeping the Fires Burning Award”

Federation (MMF) in various capacities for well over 25 years, mainly in the areas of research, education, and cultural development. Audreen always used her experience to involve Métis people in the arts, and was a leader in providing training to Métis people in the book publishing industry.



Audreen Hourie is the daughter of Edward Miles Hourie (b. 1905 at Grand Marais) and May Frances Orvis (b. 1910 at Balsam Bay).<sup>1</sup> Audreen was the youngest of six children. The Michif language was once spoken in the Orvis family but died out with the generation of Audreen’s mother. Audreen’s father was a commercial fisherman who also trapped but did not like to hunt. It was her mother, May, who owned all the guns in the home. She did all the hunting for the family and taught her boys to be hunters. She was also an excellent horsewoman; she loved riding and would compete in horse races and often won. Her mother gave Audreen the gift of music and dance. Over the years, Audreen gave numerous seminars and workshops to Métis youth on Métis music and the art of jigging.

Audreen is the MMF’s former Provincial Education co-ordinator and she was its interim president while John Morriveau was on sick leave. She was also Vice-President of the Native Council of Canada (1981-1982). As a lead up to the MMF land claim court case against the federal government, Audreen worked on the land claims research team both in Ottawa and in Manitoba.

In 1979, Audreen organized and participated in sit-ins at the provincial legislature protesting the high unemployment rates amongst Aboriginal people. In April of 1979, Audreen and other protesters took over the Employment and Immigration Canada offices in Winnipeg and stayed there for nine days. When the government didn’t follow through with their promises, they did a sit in at the legislature. There were eight leaders from Norway House and 36 other supporters. This protest lasted 28 days. When the government returned to sit in session, they passed what was dubbed “The Norway House Law,” which changed the regulations for peaceful sit-ins. After this

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<sup>1</sup> On her maternal side, Audreen is the granddaughter of William Orvis (b. 1885) and Marie Josephine Thomas and the great granddaughter of John Benson Orvis (1844-1930) and Isabella Irving (1861-1944). Her grandmother, Marie Josephine Thomas was born at Reindeer Lake in 1844, the daughter of Geordie Thomas born at Lac Brochet in 1852, and Adelaide Morin born in 1847 at Île à la Crosse.

experience, Audreen took up writing to tell the Métis story, and she continues to be active on the frontline of those speaking out for the Métis people.

Always active in the preservation of Métis culture, Audreen worked with the Manitoba Museum on the development of the Parklands Gallery. She travelled throughout

Audreen working on the Manitoba Museum, Parklands Gallery display, Jan. 13, 1998.



Manitoba to do interviews and collect the artefacts that are exhibited in the “Métis Kitchen” display. Over the years, Audreen has volunteered to teach Métis culture to Métis youth and numerous other groups. She was the managing editor of Pemmican Publications from 2000 to 2004.

On July 7, 2004, *Ka Ni Kanichihk* presented a *Keeping the Fires Burning Award* to Audreen. This award honours *Okijjida Ikwe* or “Big Hearted Women.” Big Hearted Women exemplify the seven sacred laws of honesty, courage, respect, humility, sharing, caring, and love by sharing their knowledge, talents and experience to help keep their families and communities strong.



Photograph: April 14, 1979: Audreen Hourie on guitar at the Employment and Immigration Canada offices after the first week of the protest sit-in. Photo by Jim Walker (*The Winnipeg Tribune* Photo Collection, University of Manitoba. PC 18/4642/18-3834-001)



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