

Suzanne Rochon, (Burnett), C.M. Metis Entrepreneur

Suzanne Rochon-Burnett was a founding member of The Métis Nation of Ontario, the first Vice-Chair of the MNO and a board member of the Métis Nation of Ontario Cultural Commission. She was named to the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario. She was a member of the Canada Council and the Board of Directors of TV Ontario. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Brock University, served on Brock's Board of Trustees and the Dean's Advisory Council for the Faculty of Business. She was a recipient off the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation and was the first woman inducted in the Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame. She spent her lifetime promoting Aboriginal artists and was a fiercely proud Métis woman.

Suzanne was born on March 10, 1935 in St. Adèle, Quebec. In 1965, she married Gordon W. Burnett. They had one child, Michèle-Élise. Suzanne was the first Aboriginal person in Canada to own and operate a private commercial radio station. This also made her the first Metis woman in Canada licensed by the Canadian Radio and Television Commission to operate a private radio station. In 1995, she purchased C-HOW 1470 in the Niagara Peninsula (Welland). Rochon entered broadcasting when she was 19 and soon she was producing and hosting a daily women's program and became public relations director of CKJL in Saint-Jerome, Quebec, from 1954-1960. As a freelance journalist and broadcaster, she worked for radio stations in Canada and in Europe. In the 1970s, she was a frequent guest on CBC's *Morningside*. She also acted as broadcaster for "Chanson a la Francais," syndicated and aired weekly on 22 AM and FM stations in Ontario.

In 1998, C-HOW moved to the FM dial. Suzanne has served on the boards of TV Ontario, the Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, the Crafts Council, and the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. She was a member of the Metis Nation of Ontario and served on their Cultural Commission. She was recipient of the Governor General's Medal, the Order of Ontario, the Award for Meritorious Service from the Ontario Native Friendship Centres and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2002. She established a scholarship for Aboriginal students in Communications at Brock University, and was awarded an Aboriginal Achievement Award for Media and Communications in 2004.

Suzanne passed away on April 2, 2006. Subsequently, the Métis Nation of Ontario named Suzanne as the first recipient of the *Suzanne-Rochon Burnett Volunteer of the Year Award* in recognition of her outstanding service to the Métis Nation.



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