

Sharon Anne Firth, C.M. (b. 1953)

For over two decades, twin sisters Sharon and Shirley Firth were among the top cross-country skiers in Canada.



Sharon and Shirley Firth (Canadian Ski Association, 2002)

Sharon Anne Firth received an Aboriginal Achievement Award (Sports, now the Indspire Awards) in 2005. The following biography was presented at her induction:

Sharon Firth, 10 minutes younger than her twin-sister, Shirley, was born in the remote trapping community of Aklavik, Northwest Territories. When she was 5, her family moved to Inuvik where Ms. Firth completed high school. In 1967, she was introduced to cross-country skiing with the Territorial Experimental Ski Training Program (TEST). In her first competition in Anchorage, Alaska, she placed third, an unprecedented accomplishment for a 13-year-old who was new to the sport and saw it as fun and a way to travel. Ms. Firth's first taste of Olympic competition came in 1972 at the Winter games in Sapporo, Japan. She competed again in the Olympic Winter Games in 1976, 1980, and 1984. In 1985 she competed in the Great American Ski Chase and took the overall title. She has also competed in three world championships.

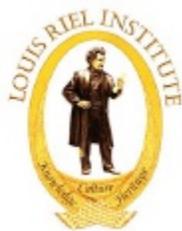
Ms. Firth is now a Youth Program Advisor for the Government of the Northwest Territories. The subject of documentaries including the CBC production "The Olympians, The Firth Sisters" and "Northern Gold", Ms. Firth is a highly

regarded role model who delivers motivational speeches to schools throughout the NWT. She gives much credit to the role of elders in her life. She has been awarded the John Semmelink Memorial Award from the Canadian Ski Association in 1972, the Commissioner's Award from the Government of the Northwest Territories in 1981, the Order of Canada in 1987. She was inducted into the Canadian Ski Museum and Skiing Hall of Fame in 1990 and she received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002. She is working to restart the Territorial Experimental Ski Training Program, which was phased out in the 1980s. Sharon Firth lives in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

Sharon Firth is the daughter of Stephen Firth (Métis) born November 20, 1922 in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Fanny Rose Greenland (Métis) born January, 21, 1922 also in the NWT.¹

Métis Scrip:

Firth, James - Concerning his Métis grant of \$240.00 - Residence, McPherson - Born, 1882 at McPherson - Occupation, trapper - Father, John Firth, (White man) - Mother, Margaret Stewart, (Métis) - Married, 1907 to Lisa Bonnetplume at McPherson - Children, five living - Annie, 1909, James Noel, 1911, Maria, Maggie, 1914, Sarah, Ann, 1916, John, Clay, 1919 - Claim no. 11.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Métis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute

¹ Stephen Firth was the son of James Firth born Feb. 12, 1889 at Fort McPherson and Eliza Bonnetplume born July 26, 1907. Stephen was the grandson of John Firth born in the Orkney Islands (1853) and Margaret Stewart (Métis b. 1863). John Firth worked for the HBC at the Peel River Post (Fort McPherson) and La Pierre House and Rampart House where he was the manager. He was a Justice of the Peace prior to the arrival of the Royal North West Mounted Police in 1903.