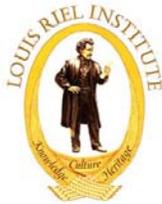


Arnold Willy Norris, C.M., Ph.D. (1922-2013)

Willy Norris was born in 1922 in northern Alberta at the Little Red River Fur Trading Post. He was the son of Métis political leader Malcolm Frederick Norris¹ and Mary Celina Tardiff. In 1919, Malcolm Norris started working for the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) at Fort Vermilion until he grew disenchanted with the trading methods of the company. He left the company and spent his next five years trapping and trading. Norris trapped near Camsell Portage. In 1922, he married Celina Tardiff and they lived trapping, hunting, and trading near Fort Fitzgerald. Norris and his family moved from place to place for many years. During this time, he witnessed the terrible conditions of Indian and Métis peoples in many northern communities and the negative impact of the HBC monopoly.

To survive as a youth Willy learned to hunt and fish, gaining valuable skills that served him well later in life. After wartime service, he obtained his doctorate and, in 1955, was recruited by the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC). As he embarked on dangerous field mapping projects to identify vital reserves of natural resources, he explored some of the country's most remote areas. In recognition of his contribution to the GSC, he was named Emeritus Research Scientist. Today, his name is synonymous with the Devonian Age among scientists and aspiring palaeontologists around the world.

Willy's early years were spent in northern Alberta and Edmonton. He excelled at school and ran Scouts Edmonton. In 1941, he joined the RCAF and trained as a navigator. After the war he enrolled at the University of Alberta and earned a B.Sc. Honours Geology and M. Sc. Geology. He married Joyce (née Berry) in Edmonton on December 23, 1950 and moved to Toronto to attain a Ph.D. in Palaeontology. Upon graduation, he joined the GSC. He was well regarded and very prolific. Willy received several awards including the Alberta Achievement Award from Premier Peter Lougheed, designation as an Emeritus Research Scientist, and the Order of Canada from Governor General Michaëlle Jean in 2006.



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¹ Malcolm Norris was the first child of John Norris and Euphrosine Plante. He was born on May 25, 1900 at St. Albert, Alberta. His father was a Scottish settler. His maternal grandparents Xavier and Elizabeth (Belcourt) Plante were a prominent couple in the Métis community at Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta. Norris was the first vice-president of the first Métis organization called the Association des Métis d'Alberta et des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (Alberta Métis Association).