

Grace Ledoux Zoldy. (b. 1933)

Grace was born on December 13, 1933 at Camperville, MB, the daughter of Louis Ledoux and Selange Pangman. Her maternal grandparents were Patrice Pangman and Isabelle Ledoux. Her paternal grandparents were Felix Ledoux and Melvina Richard. Grace speaks the Michif, Cree and Saulteaux languages. Her parents spoke these languages as well as French. Grace can trace her Metis ancestry back to Bostonais Pangman and Pierre Falcon. Grace attended Christ the King School in Camperville up to grade eight. They took school in English but retained their Saulteaux language because the church used Saulteaux for sermons, prayers and hymns.

Grace married Gaspar Zoldy and had three children, two girls and a boy. She has six grandchildren and one great granddaughter. Grace worked for seven years at the Sanatorium at the Pas in the kitchen and dining room. After two years of training she became a Home Advisor for Northern Affairs, a job she held for ten years.

Grace has been involved with MMF from its earliest days in the 1960s when Fortunate Guiboche organized the first local council in Camperville. She has served MMF in elective office as Spokesperson of Metis Women of Manitoba. Grace has been a passionate advocate for preservation of the Michif language. She was an informant for Dr. Peter Bakker¹ when he did his seminal study of the Michif language.



Grace at a Michif Language Conference in
Winnipeg, June 6-7, 2009
Photo by Lawrie Barkwell.

For over 12 years she has been involved in the Manitoba Metis Federation's Michif Language Program. She has participated in national heritage language focus groups hosted by Heritage Canada as well as the National Michif Speaker's group formed in 2006.

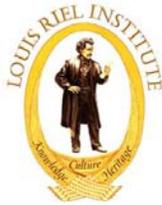
For a number of years Grace has participated in a Michif language immersion program, perhaps the only one in Canada. This unique program has been implemented in Camperville, MB. Language activist Heather Souter and two community elders, Grace Zoldy and Rita Flammand, modeled the program on the Masters-Apprentice Program concept, an innovative and successful language program originating in indigenous communities in California. Grace and Rita visited California to learn from Native people who were actually delivering the program. It is a complete immersion program where the speakers, usually elders, commit to teaching the language on a one-on-one basis in the home and in the community. It is a community-centred approach that allows speakers to effectively pass on their language to learners without classrooms, books or language experts.

¹ Peter Bakker. *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Metis*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

Four people have completed this program to date. Recently, Trish Logan, an employee of the National Aboriginal Health Organization – Metis Circle apprenticed with Grace in this program.

In 2003, Grace wrote *Li Livr Oche Michif Ayamiawina – The Book of Michif Prayers*. (Camperville, Manitoba: Camperville Michif Cree Ritual Language Project, 2003). Sixteen Michif prayers are included in this booklet; it includes The Lord’s Prayer, The Apostle’s Creed, The Holy Rosary, The Prayer to the Holy Spirit, The Beatitudes and a Bedtime Prayer. All of the translations are by Grace. The double vowel writing system for Michif is used.

Grace was a contributor to the book *Metis Legacy, Volume Two: Michif Culture, Heritage and Folkways*, by L. J. Barkwell, L.M. Dorion and A. Hourie (Eds.) Saskatoon, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 2007. She provided two prayers in the Michif language, *Ton Periinaan* (The Lord’s Prayer) and *Kigichiiteiimitinaann* (Hail Mary). Osvaldo Baigorria, a journalist and researcher, teaching at the Universidad of Buenos Aires, has used Grace’s prayers in a collection of Romance Language prayers. She can be seen on the videos taken at the Michif languages conferences in 2006 and 2008 (GDI Virtual Museum of Metis Culture and History) and also appears in the *Michif Resource Guide: Lii Michif Niiyanaan, aan Michif biikishwanaan*, Laura Burnouf, Norman Fleury and Guy Lavallee (Eds.) Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2007.



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