

Bertha Clark Jones, O.C.

Bertha Clark was the first president of the Native Women's Association of Canada formed in 1974. Prior to the formation of that group she was the president and co-founder of the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society. Bertha started her public service with Nistawayou and its housing committees, then Newstart (an upgrading program). One of 14 children, Bertha was born at Clear Hills Alberta and grew up in the Athabasca region of northern Alberta. Although she wanted to be a nurse, she did not want to leave home for education. After completing grade nine she worked in a hospital. Then the war broke out, and she went to live with her sister and brother-in-law at Grande Prairie, and worked around there until she joined the Air Force where she became a Physical Training and Drill Instructor.

Bertha served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, Women's Division during the Second World War. On September 30, 2002 at Edmonton she was one of 20 Métis Veterans to be awarded the Golden Jubilee Medals by the Métis National Council who were provided with the medals by the Governor General of Canada to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Her Majesty's reign. Bertha also served on the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women steering committee to produce the book, *Our Women in Uniform: Honouring Aboriginal Women Veterans of Alberta* published in 2003.



Bertha Clark Jones on left.

Photo courtesy of the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women

A respected Elder, Bertha has been a member of the Métis Judiciary and the Aboriginal Veterans Society, and has fought all her life for the rights of the underprivileged and disadvantaged. She remains a powerful voice and a guiding light for the Aboriginal community of Canada. In 2007, she received the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation's Award for Lifetime Achievement.

May 3, 2007 Bertha was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Canada in recognition of her lifetime achievement in the category of Social Service. The investiture took place at Ottawa in February 2008.



Bertha Clark-Jones (l), recipient of the Order of Canada, with Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, in Ottawa on February 22, 2008.
Photographer: Sgt. Eric Jolin, Rideau Hall, Office of the Secretary to the Governor General

References:

- Barkwell, Lawrence J. (Ed.) "Bertha Clark Jones" in *Women of the Metis Nation*. Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute, 2010. ISBN 978-0-9809912-5-3
- Canada Secretary of State. "Bertha Clark" in *Speaking Together: Canada's Native Women*. Ottawa: Secretary of State, 1975.



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