

## Rahontsiio Cross awarded diploma by Willis College

### **Name to live on in new award**

By: Ross Montour -Eastern Door Article

Young Rahontsiio Cross is now at his father Earl's side in the spirit world. Before he was called there by the Creator, Rahontsiio had pursued his dreams with quiet confidence, positive energy and great dignity. When he passed from this world he had been attending the Willis College of Business Technology as one of the two first recipients of the newly-established Joseph T. Norton Scholarship Award.

Last weekend his Istá:'a, Helen Cross, was presented with her son's diploma by Willis President Rima Aristocrat and Vice-President Chris Bissylas. Aristocrat and Bissylas traveled to Kahnawake last weekend to make the presentation.



The diploma is beautifully framed along with an eagle feather and two letters the young scholar had written in thanks for being selected as a recipient of the scholarship.

For Rahontsiio's Istá:'a, the presentation was a bittersweet occasion. Mixed with her loving anguish was the great pride she feels for her "baby," who, in so short a time, accomplished what so many never do in decades-long lifetimes.

In his brief tenure at Willis College, Rahontsiio so impressed the school's faculty and administrators with his leadership skills and scholarship, it was determined that he fully deserved to be awarded a full diploma accorded with honours.

"The entire Willis College family extends our deepest sympathies to Helen Cross and her family for the sudden loss of her son, Rahontsiio. We share in their grief as Rahontsiio had established a special place in our hearts," said Aristocrat.



As a testament to Rahontsiio's impact on the life of the college, numerous staff and students attended a ceremony presented earlier this year at the Odawa Friendship Centre of Ottawa presided over by Elder Paul Skanks.

Aristocrat also announced the creation of the Rahontsiio Cross Award of Excellence, which will be granted to the highest academic achiever in each TeKnoWave graduating class "in order to continue extending one of the rays of Rahontsiio's brightness to Canada's First Nations," Aristocrat said.

"On behalf of the entire Willis College family, we thank Mrs. Cross for raising such a fine, outstanding young man who, in such a short period of time, gave us inspiration for a lifetime. His legacy will guide others who will follow the trail laid down by him."