



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S AWARDS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE PERSONS CASE

Each year, women and men from across the country who have made a difference in the area of women's equality earn our respect and appreciation. The Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case are presented annually to individual Canadians for their contributions to promote the equality women of all ages in Canada. The Awards were instituted by the Governor General in 1979 to mark the 50th anniversary of the "Persons Case". An engraved medal representing the "Famous Five" Alberta women is presented to the Awards recipients in an annual ceremony.

The Persons Case

The Persons Case of 1929 was a landmark victory in the struggle of Canadian women for equality. For eight years, groups had repeatedly requested that a woman be appointed to the Senate, naming Judge Emily Murphy as their candidate. Three consecutive Prime Ministers were advised not to appoint her on the basis that women were not "qualified persons" according to the *British North America Act* - the constitution that governed Canada.

Emily Murphy invited four Alberta leaders - Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Irene Parlby - to join her in an appeal to the highest court in the British Empire. In 1929, the Privy Council ruled that women were indeed "qualified persons", therefore eligible for appointment to the Senate.

The determination of these Famous Five achieved not only the right for women to serve in the Senate, but they and their many contributions paved the way for women to participate in other aspects of public life.

Criteria for the Awards

Candidates for the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case must be Canadian citizens. To be eligible for nomination, candidates must be over 25 years of age. Youth awards nominees are ages 15-25 years.

The Awards honour outstanding contributions that have promoted the equality of girls and women in Canada, demonstrated by leadership and excellence in any field, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

Candidates whose effectiveness and courage have advanced the cause of equality for girls and women in significant and substantial ways that have enriched their communities will be considered. For example, they may have identified needs for change and found innovative solutions in sectors relating to women; lobbied for groups and services; initiated public education and information activities; or through their lives, made outstanding creative achievements or otherwise advanced equality for girls and women.

Five awards are given annually to candidates chosen from across Canada, in addition to one Youth award.

Nomination Procedure

Nominations for the Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case may be submitted by individuals, groups, community and business groups and others. Nomination forms are available from Status of Women Canada at the address below or from the Status of Women Canada Web site: www.swc-cfc.gc.ca.

It is important to provide all of the information asked on the nomination form, and include the achievements the candidate has undertaken with respect to improving equality for women of all ages in Canadian society.

Nominations should include letters of support, stating specific reasons for the candidate's nomination. The candidate's resume or curriculum vitae should also be included, providing information on the candidate's career, volunteer work, education, awards and other notable achievements.

Nomination forms should be submitted to the following address:

Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case

Status of Women Canada
Ottawa, ON
K1P 1H9

Telephone: (613) 995-7835
facsimile: (613) 943-2386