

For Immediate Release — Tuesday, September 19, 2017

## Scholarship program to honour influential quartet, support educational opportunities for Blackfoot students

Seeking to preserve the Blackfoot cultural legacies of four influential men while furthering educational opportunities for Blackfoot students, Dr. Robert and Mrs. Priscilla Janes and the University of Lethbridge have created a series of new student awards for Blackfoot students.

The awards, for both graduate and undergraduate level students from the Blackfoot Confederacy, are named in honour and in memory of Narcisse (Tatsikiistamik “Middle Bull”) Blood, Gerald (Sikapiiistamix “Grey Bull”) Conaty, Allan (Mi’kskimmiisoka’simii “Iron Shirt”) Pard, and Frank (Miikskim “Iron”) Weasel Head.



“I knew these men and worked with them closely over the course of 25 years and then, all of a sudden, they all passed away within about three years of each other,” says Dr. Janes. “That had been on my mind ever since and I’d been thinking, how can these men be recognized, and their legacies carried on in some way? So, Priscilla and I came up with this idea of scholarships, which we named for them.”

Janes has a long history of working with the country’s First Nations and Inuit peoples. He was the founding director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, NWT and spent 14 years working with Northern residents to establish the first professional museum in the Canadian Subarctic, as well as the Science Institute of the NWT.

Janes then took over as President and Chief Executive Officer at Calgary’s Glenbow Museum (1989-2000) and went to work on building stronger relationships with First Nations.

“That was a process of hiring the right people and developing relationships with the Four Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy,” he says. “We began by striking a First Nations Advisory Council, hiring Blackfoot staff, and meeting the Blackfoot personally at their traditional ceremonies. Over time, a relationship of trust, mutual respect and learning developed. The culmination of this relationship was the decision to return sacred Blackfoot objects to the Confederacy – the largest repatriation of its kind in Canadian history.”

Upon leaving the Glenbow, Janes continued to work with First Nations peoples on a number of projects. When he looked at establishing a series of scholarships to honour his late colleagues, the University of Lethbridge stood out due to its close relationship with the Blackfoot Confederacy and its longtime commitment to First Nations, Métis and Indigenous (FNMI) education.

“They were all key players in preserving the Blackfoot culture in Alberta,” Janes says of his late friends. “The University of Lethbridge was a natural because it truly is in the heart of Blackfoot country and has a very strong presence of both Blackfoot undergraduate and graduate students – it was just a natural fit.”

U of L President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Mike Mahon says the gift will further promote Blackfoot education at the U of L and serve as a valuable link to the men who were so committed to preserving Blackfoot culture.

“We’re extremely fortunate to be able to present these scholarships and very thankful to Dr. Janes and Priscilla for this enduring gift,” says Mahon, who was bestowed the Blackfoot name *lipisowahsi* or Morning Star, meaning son of the sun and the moon, when he was inducted into the Kainai Chieftainship in 2012. “The University embraces its responsibility to continue to provide educational opportunities for Blackfoot students and for preserving their rich culture for generations to come. Through this gift, Blackfoot students will be encouraged to celebrate the legacies left by these very influential and prominent men, and to continue the work they devoted so much to over the course of their lives.”

The undergraduate and graduate level awards will be available to students from the Blackfoot Confederacy: Siksika, Piikani (North and South Peigan) and Kainaiwa (Blood) who actively participate and contribute to their Blackfoot culture and heritage through activities of preservation, interpretation or celebration.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/scholarship-program-honour-influential-quartet-support-educational-opportunities-blackfoot>

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