

Spontaneous Gift to One Will Now Benefit Many



George Bear can hardly suppress his glee that things have worked out so well... and for so many. First there was the scholarship just for him: \$18,000 to attend Willis College of Business and Technology in Ottawa. Then came the realization that he couldn't afford the living

expenses to take advantage of the scholarship. Then came the promise of an additional \$12,000 to cover living costs. And now, to top it off, Willis has created an annual scholarship to assist Aboriginal young people to study IT programs at the College, up to the full \$30,000 for out-of-town recipients. It all started last summer when Bear, a local artist and hoop dancer, performed and spoke at an educational conference in Winnipeg. After hearing him talk about the hardships that Aboriginal people face in entering the workforce, Rima Aristocrat, President and CEO of Willis College, spontaneously offered him a scholarship to attend her school. For Bear, the award was a mixed blessing for he then had to find the money to support his travel to Ottawa and his living expenses. After the story ran in the local media, both Via Rail and Air Canada stepped forward to offer him travel assistance. Inspired by Bear's example, Aristocrat started looking for better ways to support the training and education of Aboriginal youth. The first step was to turn her generous offer to Bear into an annual event and Willis College announced the Joseph T. Norton Scholarship, named for the Mohawk Grand Chief, valued at \$18,000 annually.

Then members of the Joseph T. Norton Scholarship board of trustees, including the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, Donna Cona Inc., the Kahnawake Community, and the Canadian Imperial

Bank of Commerce decided to add \$12,000 in living expenses for each recipient needing to relocate. Through her work with Canada's Aboriginal leaders, Aristocrat is now mobilizing a coalition of public and private partners to launch an innovative initiative—called TeKnoWave—to develop 1,000 skilled IT professionals within Canada's Aboriginal community. In Winnipeg for the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards—where Chief Norton is being honoured—Aristocrat is also meeting with officials at the University of Winnipeg to build on their current partnership with Willis and discuss the TeknoWave project.

The University's Division of Continuing Education delivers its Management Certificate Program to Willis College students, for which program graduates receive two unallocated course credits in the Faculty of Arts and Science. And George Bear? "it was



Creator's way of saying 'now it's time'" He will receive his \$18,000 Willis scholarship certificate and his \$12,000 living expenses certificate at a special presentation on Friday, March 8, 2002 at 4:00 p.m. at the University of Winnipeg. He has a lot to be happy about.

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