



## LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS TO BE HONOURED AT 2019 MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

Every year, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission, Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties and the Canadian Human Rights Commission mark International Human Rights Day by honouring Manitobans who work tirelessly to protect and advance human rights in our community at the Manitoba Human Rights Awards.

**When: Thursday, December 12, 2019 (doors open at 5:30 p.m.)**

**Where: RBC Convention Centre, Third Floor Concourse**

Media is welcome to attend the Manitoba Human Rights Awards (program to begin at 5:50 p.m. Please call us to advise or to arrange an interview at [hrc@gov.mb.ca](mailto:hrc@gov.mb.ca)

**Tickets are \$10.00 and must be purchased in advance at:**

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/2019-manitoba-human-rights-awards-tickets-80756397559>

### HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT AWARD OF MANITOBA: **TAJA LONSTRUP**

The Human Rights Commitment Award recognizes a person or group who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of the rights of Manitobans, beyond the work they do in their paid job or position. Taja Lonstrup, a resident of Brandon Manitoba, is the mother of two children, who have disabilities. Taja has worked tirelessly to promote the rights of her children and the rights of caregivers of people with disabilities. In her award nomination, Inclusion Westman states, “[her] efforts to raise awareness, lobby decision makers such as local MLA's, and to pressure local service providers has been very effective in making gaps in service evident. She is interested in empowering families to speak out for the supports and services they need in order to participate fully as a family, and to be contributing members of their community.”

Each year, a distinct piece is created by a local artist for the recipient. This year, Ildiko Nova's piece “One Community” was selected. The piece focuses on what we all share, namely a need for belonging and celebration.



THE MANITOBA  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
COMMISSION



LA COMMISSION DES  
DROITS DE LA PERSONNE  
DU MANITOBA



Canadian  
human rights  
commission

Commission  
canadienne des  
droits de la personne

## HONOURABLE MENTION **SHAMELESS CIRCLE**

In the Commitment Award category, the awards committee is also recognizing the outstanding achievement of Shameless Circle. Founded in 2018, Shameless Circle is a volunteer-led healing circle for women aimed to end stigma around shaming women for standing up for themselves and their children. Shameless provides a **safe space for all women** who experience isolation and are seeking a sense of community.

## SYBIL SHACK YOUTH AWARD: **OYINDAMOLA ALAKA**

The Sybil Shack Human Rights Youth Award recognizes the commitment of a person or group aged 25 years or younger whose work has impacted the advancement of rights and freedoms locally or internationally. Dr. Sybil Shack was a recognized educator, writer, and broadcaster and was active in the promotion of human rights all her life. She bequeathed funds that have been used to provide a cash award that honours her commitment to educating youth and to human rights.

Oyindamola Alaka is a recent graduate of the University of Manitoba, where she was active in student politics. Oyindamola was one of the organizers of #BringBackOurGirls, a 2014 campaign in response to the abduction of 276 school-aged girls in Nigeria. In 2018, she founded the Young Black Professionals Network of Manitoba and is active in the Congress of Black Women. Her record of achievement demonstrates the immeasurable impact youth can have in the advancement of human rights.

## AARON BERG AWARD **SACHA PAUL**

The Aaron Berg award is given to a person involved in the legal profession who has contributed significantly to the advancement of human rights in Manitoba by way of their legal work. Sacha is a member of the English River First Nation, a Dene community located in Northern Saskatchewan. He is a graduate of the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Law (2002). Admitted to the Manitoba Bar in Manitoba in 2003, Northwest Territories Bar in 2007, and Nunavut Bar in 2014. He is a partner at Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP, where he practises in the areas of Indigenous Law, Public/Administrative Law, Insurance Law and Personal Injury Law. Through his practice and his community involvement, Sacha has demonstrated a significant commitment to ensuring access to justice and the advancement of human rights. He represented Amnesty International in Omar Khadr v. Canada, a case which has had far-reaching impact in domestic and international human rights law. Sacha sits on the Manitoba Law Reform Commission, is a Bencher for the Law Society of Manitoba. He is an editor with the Canadian Native Law Reporter and has taught and mentored law students at the University of Manitoba's Robson Hall. As noted in his

nomination for this award, “Sacha takes a practical, proactive approach and incorporates a human rights mindset into all that he does.”

## HONOURABLE MENTION

### **LEGAL HELP CENTRE**

In the Aaron Berg Award category, the awards committee is also recognizing the commitment of the Legal Help Centre. The mission of the Legal Help Centre is to provide access to justice to all persons. This non-profit organization has filled a void in our legal system by providing legal workshops and services to low income individuals who may not qualify for legal aid or other services. Their Family Law Clinic and Consumer Protection Clinics provide much needed information to some of our city's most marginalized groups such as women, indigenous people, new Canadians, people with disabilities or those that are otherwise socially disadvantaged. LHC empowers these groups by providing them with knowledge and tools that assist them in navigating our justice system — which is overwhelming for most. Their commitment to access to justice exemplifies the spirit of the award, which seeks to advance equality and justice for all Manitobans.