

Winnipeg's Gail Asper receives Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award

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Winnipeg, Manitoba – Winnipeg's Gail Asper, 49, became the youngest Canadian and the first Manitoban to receive the Jane Jacobs Lifetime Achievement Award today, designated annually to a Canadian who has made an extraordinary contribution to his or her community over many years. Previous winners of the Canadian Urban Institute's (CUI) lifetime achievement award have included Toronto's Ed Mirvish, June Callwood and Moses Znaimer, Montreal's Phyllis Lambert and B.C.'s Hon. Michael Harcourt.

CUI President and CEO Glen Murray presented Gail Asper with the award in Winnipeg today saying that her reputation as a tireless community organizer and volunteer reaches well beyond the Manitoba borders.

"Certainly Gail's work to build the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, the first federal museum outside of Ottawa, has earned her a national reputation as a passionate visionary, but in this community many arts organizations like the Manitoba Theatre Centre have known for a long time the great contributions she's made to this community for decades," Murray said.

"Typically this award acknowledges people who have accomplished great things over sixty or seventy years, but in Gail Asper we have a recipient who deserves this award for the same incredible community commitment delivered in a far shorter time," Murray added.

Accepting the award Gail Asper said her accomplishments are driven by the energy and inspiration she gets from countless other volunteers and staff, she's had the privilege to work with in Manitoba and across the country.

"To be counted among visionaries like Jane Jacobs and Phyllis Lambert is truly an honour. I am incredibly humbled to be recognized with this award and to be placed in the same group as these women who are both an inspiration to me," Asper said.

About 500 elite members of Canada's city building community will gather in Toronto at the Royal York Hotel on June 5, 2009 to honour 18 other recipients of CUI Urban Leadership Awards (ULA), of which the Jane Jacobs award is the most prestigious. Complete press releases on each of the other ULA recipients are available on the CUI website at: (<http://www.canurb.com/awards/ula/leadershipawards2009.php>).

The Urban Leadership Awards (ULA) Program honours Canadian individuals, groups and organizations that have made significant contributions to improving the quality of life in Canada's cities and urban regions. The 2009 ULA's have been made possible by the generous support of a variety of corporate sponsors including Gold Sponsors Loblaws Properties Ltd., Scotiabank, TD Bank Financial Group, the Ontario Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Environics, the City of Toronto, GE Canada and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Community Builder Sponsors and other contributors include Toronto Hydro, Local 27 of the Union of Carpenters and Allied Workers, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life Assurance Companies, Manitoba Hydro and Metrolinx.

The judges for this year's awards included Canadians who have dedicated their lives to public service and who have detailed knowledge of the local stories and triumphs of Canadians in their home communities. Under the chairmanship of the Hon. David Crombie, the committee included; Al Duerr, former Mayor of Calgary; Newfoundland's Dr. Linda Inkpen; Dr. Antonia Maioni, Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada; John Kim Bell, founder of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation; Ms. Mitzie Hunter, a

Vice President at Goodwill Industries; and, Dr. Nola Kate Seymoar, President and CEO, International Centre for Sustainable Cities, based in British Columbia.

The Canadian Urban Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in urban areas across Canada and throughout the world.

For more information or to arrange for interviews with Glen Murray or Gail Asper contact:
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A few facts about Jane Jacobs and Gail Asper

- Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) was a distinguished urbanist whose vision and leadership fostered the development of cities around the world.
- Known for her dedicated and thoughtful activism, contributions to urban theory, numerous publications plus her energetic devotion and determination, Jane challenged and effectively changed urban thought and planning.
- In her book, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), Jane emphasized the importance of cherishing, nurturing and utilizing cultural characteristics in the pursuit of practical solutions. Her other works include *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, *The Economy of Cities*, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, *The Question of Separatism: Quebec and the Struggle over Sovereignty-Association*, *Systems of Survival* and *The Nature of Economies*
- Jane pursued her own ideas and values with "the pragmatism of an engineer, the authority of a Mother Superior and the passion of an Old Testament prophet," says her friend, David Crombie.
- After appearing in a series of fundraising plays put on by the Manitoba Bar Association in support of the Manitoba Theatre Centre, Gail Asper became president of the board and co-chaired the theatre centre's most important fundraising efforts helping to raise more than \$16 million dollars.
- Gail is a member of the Board of Directors for the National Arts Centre Foundation and recently finished a lengthy term as Vice-Chair of the Council for Business and Arts in Canada.
- She helped establish the Arts & Cultural Enhancement Initiative in Winnipeg to lobby for more arts funding from the provincial and municipal governments.
- She is a founding member of Manitoba's Arts Stabilization program.
- Gail's commitment and support in this area has been recognized with the Governor General's Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts and with an Outstanding Achievement Award from Women in Film and Television-Toronto. Gail was instrumental in creating the CanWest Foundation's Raise a Reader national literacy program and has a long history of serving on a variety of not-for-profit boards including United Way, having chaired the Winnipeg campaign and served as Chair of the Board.
- Gail has spearheaded the campaign to have the Canadian Museum for Human Rights built here in Winnipeg. It is the first national museum that will be located outside of the country's capital in over 40 years. Gail has been instrumental in helping raise close to \$300 million for the museum from various sources, including 3 levels of government. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is scheduled to open in 2012.
- Gail has also helped bring many important amenities to her community, including the CanWest Performing Arts Centre and Lyric Theatre in Assiniboine Park.

- Gail is President of three private charitable foundations: The CanWest Foundation, The Asper Foundation and The Gail Asper Family Foundation.
- She is a Director of CanWest Global Communications Corp.