



**Presented to:  
Joan Glode**

*Given at Halifax  
In the Province of Nova Scotia, Canada  
The twenty-fifth day of May, Two Thousand and Nine*

Joan Glode has devoted her life's energies toward improving the conditions and lives of countless First Nations children and families in Canada.

Her quiet determination and passion for social justice have made her one of the most recognized names in advancing child welfare in this country.

Ms. Glode's quest began on a morning in 1975, at the Micmac Native Friendship Centre in Halifax. She was having tea with two young people when one said to her, "I grew up in foster care but I think I came from a certain native community – can you tell me who I am?" The stark reality behind the comment struck Ms. Glode. "These kids didn't know who they were," she recalls. "They couldn't speak their own language; didn't know their traditions because they were in foster care outside their own community."

That interaction would influence Joan Glode's life for years, and led eventually to her role as executive director of Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services, formed in 1985. In that position, which she still holds today, Joan Glode oversees service support to all 13 Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia. Determined to help as many children as possible, she has extended the organization's reach to serve all Aboriginal families in Nova Scotia.

Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services is one of the most highly-respected child welfare agencies in Canada. It was created after representatives from Dalhousie University and the Union of Nova Scotia Indians sponsored a workshop in 1982. The session brought Mi'kmaq people from all walks of life together to discuss social conditions and services on reserves. A consensus was reached that it was time for the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia to regain control over family and children's services. Joan Glode's direction was instrumental in those discussions. As a result, she was the obvious choice to lead the formation of a new agency.

Under her leadership, the agency eventually assumed all the functions of a child and family services agency, including child protection. Since its founding, the agency has started to reverse the trend of Mi'kmaq and other Aboriginal children in Nova Scotia being adopted

out of the community. The organization has made major strides in applying family group decision-making in resolving child welfare cases.

Joan Glode's efforts are not limited to Nova Scotia. Two years ago, she and Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, signed a momentous Memorandum of Understanding to bring about a fundamental change in the funding approach of First Nations Child & Family Services Agencies. The change is intended to reduce the growing number of children entering the child welfare system.

We are proud that Joan Glode has had a long and dedicated history with Dalhousie. In 1973, she became the first Mi'kmaq woman in Nova Scotia to receive a Master of Social Work degree. She later served as a member of the Committee on Ethnic and Racial Affairs at the School of Social Work and, in the 1970s, helped the school develop its Affirmative Action Policy – the first academic program at Dalhousie to implement such a policy. She was a key player in developing the undergraduate degree in social work offered to Mi'kmaq students. Many Mi'kmaq students have graduated from that program and have gone on to have lasting impacts on their communities. Ms. Glode continues to play a valuable role at Dalhousie – she serves on the school's advisory committee, has taught as a sessional instructor, and provides field placements for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

A role model and mentor, Ms. Glode enthusiastically gives back to the community. She is president of the Board of Directors for the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada, has served as a founding member and as Executive Director of the Micmac Native Friendship Centre, and has worked with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and the Nova Scotia Provincial Health Council.

Ms. Glode has been recognized by many organizations. Just two months ago, during a televised ceremony, she received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for her public service. Previously, she was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal. There are many other honors too numerous to mention here.

In recognition of her tireless work on behalf of Aboriginal children and families, her unwavering support of the Dalhousie School of Social Work, her passion for social justice and her outstanding leadership, I ask you, Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of Senate, to bestow upon Joan Glode the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

