

ORDER OF MANITOBA



ORDRE DU MANITOBA

May 12, 2025

**OUTSTANDING MANITOBANS CHOSEN
TO RECEIVE THE ORDER OF MANITOBA**

Twelve Manitobans whose contributions encompass a broad range of endeavours and accomplishments will soon receive the Order of Manitoba, the province's highest honour. The formal investiture ceremony is scheduled to be held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at the Manitoba Legislative Building.

The Order of Manitoba was established in 1999 to honour Manitobans who have demonstrated excellence and achievement, thereby enriching the social, cultural or economic well-being of the province and its residents.

"The 12 outstanding Manitobans to be invested into the 2025 Order of Manitoba serve to inspire us and reinforce that we all have the power to make a difference," said Lt.-Gov. Anita Neville, chancellor of the order, who will preside over ceremony. "The vast and varied contributions made by these individuals, whether their impact is felt on the local, national or international level, are most worthy of acknowledgement and acclaim."

Appointments to the order are made by the chancellor based on the recommendations of an advisory council. Order of Manitoba members are entitled to use the initials O.M. after their names for life. The list of all members of the Order of Manitoba is on permanent display in the Legislative Building.

The following Manitobans will be invested at the 2025 ceremony:

The Hon. Maria E. Chaput, CM

The first franco-Manitoban woman in the Canadian Senate, Maria Chaput has dedicated her community work and professional career to the growth of the Manitoba francophone community. She led many fundraising campaigns in support of important organizations such as Cercle Molière and the Maison Gabrielle-Roy, and played a key role in the modernization of the Official Languages Act.

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Rebecca Gibson

Partner and co-owner of Eagle Vision, Rebecca Gibson is an award-winning actor, writer, director, producer, playwright, best-selling author, devoted mentor and advocate for equity, diversity and accessibility. She is a recent winner of a 2023 International Emmy Award (only the second-ever Manitoba win) and the Banff World Media Festival's 2022 Innovative Producer of the Year Award.

Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht

A dedicated teacher and renowned scientist, Dr. Gordon Giesbrecht is a world leader in the study and treatment of hypothermia and drowning prevention. Under his leadership, the University of Manitoba has become a globally renowned centre of expertise in cold stress physiology and pre-hospital care for human hyperthermia. His findings have saved countless lives, with his recommendations forming protocols that are now used by emergency responders across Canada.

Dr. Digvir S. Jayas, OC

An engineer and agrologist, Dr. Digvir Jayas was the vice-president (research and international) and a distinguished professor, Department of Biosystems Engineering, at the University of Manitoba. He currently is the president of University of Lethbridge. A world-renowned grain scientist, Dr. Jayas has received multiple awards for his 30-year research and teaching career that has enhanced grain preservation in Canada and around the world.

Glen Kruck

Throughout his 35-year career with Community Health and Housing in Brandon, Glen Kruck has been dedicated to helping people in need. His work has centred on creating long-term, sustainable solutions to homelessness in Brandon, particularly for those struggling with mental health and addiction issues. His housing programs have benefited thousands of Brandon residents and he was instrumental in the development of Brandon's first homeless shelters.

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Trudy L. Lavallee

The former Child and Family Advocate for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Trudy Lavallee's compassion and advocacy for First Nations children led to her developing the concept for Jordan's Principle. In November 2005, she wrote an article published in the *Paediatrics and Child Health Journal* entitled *Honouring Jordan: Putting First Nations Children First and Funding Fights Second*, which led to the federal introduction of the Jordan's Principle bill.

J. Kenneth Paupanekis

A proud Elder of the Kinosao Sipi Cree Nation (Norway House), Ken Paupanekis has dedicated himself to the well-being of Indigenous communities in Manitoba. He has tirelessly worked toward Indigenous language revitalization, with his fluency in Cree, Anishinaabe, English and French assisting with the development of key language programs. His contribution to Manitoba universities has ensured that future generations can access culturally relevant learning materials.

Kristie Pearson

A dedicated fundraiser and volunteer, Kristie Pearson supports community organizations who provide services to Manitobans. Her fundraising efforts have helped raise over \$30 million for charities and projects including the Clan Mothers Healing Village, Rainbow Resource Centre, United Way Winnipeg and the YMCA/YWCA. During the pandemic, she developed Linking Hope, in response to the many small agencies struggling to raise funds and recruit volunteers.

Walter John Schroeder

A successful business executive and philanthropist, Walter Schroeder has pledged over \$500 million to support educational causes through the Schroeder Foundation. This includes a recent \$15-million donation to create the Schroeder Institute of Entertainment and Media Arts at RRC Polytech and \$1.25 million to support the Ozhitoon Onji Peenjiiee - Build from Within program to support Indigenous teachers. He also provides over 700 post-secondary scholarships annually.

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Charlie Spiring

A successful investment advisor, Charlie Spiring's philanthropy strengthens the social fabric of Manitoba. His foundation has provided millions of dollars to local programs including Siloam Mission, Adoption Options Manitoba, Health Sciences Centre Foundation and the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation. He led the 'InSpiring Match' for United Way Winnipeg, matching \$1 million for The Forever Family initiative, providing immediate support to family centres across Winnipeg.

Felix C. Walker

A proud member of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN), Felix Walker provides innovative programming for the well-being of his community. A band councillor at 25, he led programs based on traditional Cree values including reducing trauma to children in care. He also established group home care for youth and continues to work with Elders through the Rediscovery of Families program, where families reunite and heal in traditional land settings.

Marion F. Willis, MSM

Marion Willis has contributed to safer and healthier communities in Manitoba by creating and operating St. Boniface Street Links, a program that delivers a holistic approach to help homeless people in Winnipeg. She is also the founder of Morberg House, an addiction recovery residence in Winnipeg. She works tirelessly to break the cycle of homelessness and to set new standards of caring for vulnerable people by helping to restore hope and dignity in their lives.

More information about the Order of Manitoba can be found at:

<https://manitobalg.ca/awards/order-of-manitoba/>.

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