

NEWS RELEASE

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Announcing 2021 Culture & Heritage Award Recipients

The City of Nanaimo celebrates local excellence

Summary

Every year since 1998, the City of Nanaimo has celebrated local excellence in arts and culture through the Culture & Heritage Awards. The annual awards program is an opportunity to honour extraordinary achievement while generating awareness and pride for the calibre of arts and culture activity in Nanaimo, as well as the dynamic impact of the sector on our community's economic, social and cultural well-being.

The 2021 Culture & Heritage Award recipients are:

Ay Lelum—The Good House of Design will receive the Excellence in Culture Award for their contributions to local, national and international fashion. Run by sisters Aunalee Boyd-Good and Sophia Seward Good, in collaboration with their family; mother Sandra Moorhouse Good, father William Good, and brother Joel Good, this Coast Salish design house is recognized as one of Canada's leading Indigenous fashion companies. Committed to sustainability and ethical practices, while following cultural protocols, their ready-to-wear line is produced in Vancouver, and their couture garments are made by hand on Snuneymuxw territory. Since 2018, they have presented collections at Vancouver Fashion Week, across North America, and have had their couture pieces featured in Vogue Italia, as well as numerous other publications. Ay Lelum also records their own music in Hul'q'umi'num and English as a part of their artistic and storytelling process.

Eliot White-Hill has been named Emerging Cultural Leader in recognition of his inspiring contributions as a published author, storyteller and artist. Eliot White-Hill, Kwulasultun, is a Coast Salish artist who comes from the White family of Snuneymuxw, the Rice family of Penelakut and with roots in the Nuu-chah-nulth world through the Hamilton family of Hupačasath. He is a graduate of Vancouver Island University, and also works as a Project Coordinator with the Petroglyph Development Group, the economic development arm of the Snuneymuxw Nation. White-Hill has recently worked on projects for Literacy Central Vancouver Island, Tourism Nanaimo, Nanaimo Art Gallery, City of Nanaimo and VIU. In 2020 his art was commissioned for Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond's Report "In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in BC Health Care."

Marianne Turley will be celebrated with an Honour in Culture Award in recognition of her volunteer contributions to arts and culture in Nanaimo over many years. Turley was a long-time champion of Vancouver Island Symphony as a donor, fundraiser, planner, board member, leader and advocate. Through the Annual Gala, the Symphony of Roses, the Symphony in the Harbour, Turley raised funds and the profile of the Symphony. She founded the Symphony's Women of Note program and organized events and guest speakers to raise funds to allow students from SD68 to visit the Port Theatre to experience a live concert annually. Turley also served as the Chair of the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce, and as a member of the City of Nanaimo's Culture Committee.

Christine Whitelaw will be celebrated with an Honour in Culture Award to recognize her passionate volunteer contributions to arts and culture in Nanaimo over many years. She is a leader, a fundraiser and donor, active board member, committee member, and organizer. She has been involved with the Port Theatre, including in the efforts to raise funds for the construction of the building, as well as with the Vancouver Island Symphony, and the Nanaimo Conservatory of Music, serving in various capacities to bring music to our community and support the development of musicians.

Award recipients are named by Council. Throughout the year, the City accepts nominations from the community, which are reviewed by a panel before recommendations go to Council. Traditionally, recipients are honoured at a free community event at the Port Theatre with live performances. In 2021, celebrations will be adapted to align with COVID-19 safety protocols.

Strategic Link: The 2021 Culture & Heritage Award aligns with the goals of the City of Nanaimo's Strategic Plan and the Cultural Plan for a Creative Nanaimo by: creating a vibrant culture of innovation, stewardship and partnership to encourage a diverse and healthy economy now and into the future; supporting arts and culture as an integral part of everyday life; and strengthening the creative sector by investing in organizations and people who animate our cultural spaces.

Key Points

- The annual Culture & Heritage Awards program celebrates and honours local excellence and achievement.
- 2021 recipients include: Excellence in Culture Award to Ay Lelum – The Good House of Design, Emerging Cultural Leader Award to Eliot White-Hill, Honour in Culture Award to Marianne Turley, Honour in Culture Award to Christine Whitelaw.

Quotes

"Those that we are honoring this year have demonstrated vision, passion, creativity and leadership in the ways that they've contributed to Nanaimo's cultural life, and by extension, the well-being of our community and the unique character of this place. We look forward to highlighting and celebrating their outstanding achievements."

Leonard Krog
Mayor of Nanaimo
City of Nanaimo

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