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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Herman Yellow Old Woman to Receive the 2020 Lieutenant Governor's Award

September 5, 2020

Edmonton, Alberta - The Alberta Museums Association (AMA) is pleased to announce Herman Yellow Old Woman as the 2020 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Award, in recognition of his instrumental role in championing the rights of Indigenous communities to represent themselves and to have a voice in creating and shaping museum spaces.

Herman Yellow Old Woman has left an indelible mark on not only Alberta's museum sector, but the national and international sector as well. He was a key member of the committee behind Glenbow's Nitsitapiisinni Gallery, created to reflect the Blackfoot worldview. The Gallery has been internationally recognized as one of the first exhibits told from an Indigenous perspective and is the epitome of the reconciliation and healing museums are now striving for.

One of Mr. Yellow Old Woman's most impactful contributions to the museum sector has been his fight for the repatriation of Chief Crowfoot's regalia from The Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter, UK, an effort that began over a decade ago. Alongside his colleagues at Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, Mr. Yellow Old Woman worked tirelessly to educate both the public and Exeter City Council about the importance of Blackfoot Cultural Patrimony, and encouraged them to see clothing not as objects or artifacts but as living beings - ancestors who, upon their return to their people, have the ability to help heal the harms done by the colonial legacy of museums. This year, the hard work paid off when Exeter agreed that Crowfoot should be returned to the Siksika Nation. Said Mr. Yellow Old Woman: "I feel like we're bringing his spirit home."

Mr. Yellow Old Woman was instrumental in the development of the First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Act (FNSCORA), and the repatriation of over 260 sacred and ceremonial objects from Glenbow's collections and many more from other museum collections. He has cared for museum collections worldwide by conducting ceremony, visiting and caring for sacred bundles and the ancestors residing in museums in Canada and internationally.

"In selecting Herman Yellow Old Woman for the Lieutenant Governor's Award, the AMA Board of Directors recognizes his spirit of giving and his important role in establishing best practice standards for the Alberta museum community," said Meaghan Patterson, Executive Director / CEO. "His contributions to the sector are a gift to future generations, not only for the Blackfoot, but for museum professionals navigating the changing role of museums in society and the necessary work of reconciliation."

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Background

The Lieutenant Governor's Award recognizes the extraordinary contributions of an individual to Alberta's museum community and their achievement in culture and heritage at the provincial, national, and / or international level. Recipients are nominated and selected by the AMA Secretariat and Board of Directors. While the award is usually presented at an Awards Ceremony as part of the AMA's Annual Conference, due to COVID-19 restrictions this year, we will be celebrating Mr. Yellow Old Woman virtually.

The Alberta Museums Association provides a variety of programs and services to over 500 museums and museum professionals across Alberta. Through its focus on community engagement, social responsibility, and sustainability, the AMA utilizes its funding, accreditation, awards, and professional development opportunities to support institutions in their vital role as leading contributors to the social, cultural, and educational fabric of Alberta. The AMA believes that museums can leverage their positions as trusted institutions to encourage respectful dialogue, provide educational opportunities, and bring awareness to some of society's most pressing issues.

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