

Citation for Dr. Phyllis Artiss for 2013 MUNPA Tribute Award
November 26, 2013

2013 has been a year of professional recognition for Dr. Phyllis Artiss. In January, she was named as a winner of the Queen's Jubilee Medal. The citation read, in part: "Gifted teacher, passionate social justice advocate and feminist, Phyllis has touched many through her quiet work building key community institutions." Today, the university community also recognizes her 'quiet' post-retirement contributions to both the community and to the university. The operant word in these descriptions of her work is the word 'quiet'. For the thirty-seven years of her career and continuing into her retirement from the Faculty of Arts in 2002, Phyllis has been the hard working, behind-the-scenes visionary whose steadfast commitment to ideals of social justice inspires others to work along with her to achieve justice for women and minorities. She stays focused on the work to be accomplished, is tireless in the pursuit of justice for others and does not seek personal recognition. Her projects are writ large, but researchers have to peer hard into the small print to find her name.

Phyllis was appointed a board member on the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women and became closely connected to the women's movement in NL, working with coordinators of Women's Centres and other feminist groups across the province. She became involved with organizations representing the province's minority women with special needs, including Aboriginal women, refugee and immigrant women, and women with disabilities. She is active with OXFAM, the Native Friendship Center and has tried to bring aboriginal women together with other women to build meaningful connections.

She was involved in the establishment of Marguerite's Place in 2011, a facility which houses the Status of Women Council, the Women's Centre, a Resource Centre, clothing boutique, and affordable housing units for single women over 30. She is an active member of the Terre Neuve Grannies, the local chapter of the Stephen Lewis Foundation which works to support the grandmothers of Africa who are raising grandchildren whose parents died of AIDS. She was a founding member of the Social Justice Cooperative that grew out of her work with Oxfam. The organization seeks to act as a focal point for all groups and associations in the province who seek social justice, engaging the community in a process of collaboration to conduct research, public awareness campaigns and advocacy.

She continues as a social and political activist and recently supported the Occupy Movement with visits and provisions. Her work was central to development of *Let's Teach About Women*, a website that documents the rise of feminism in NL. It offers detailed historical information as well as teaching resources. She ran for the NDP in Labrador in the federal election in 2008 and at that time she also served as a member of the NDP Provincial Executive and chair of the NDP Women's Caucus.

Within the academic community, she contributed to Porter and Gustafson's recent book: *Reproducing Women: Family and Health Work across Three Generations*. Phyllis participated in the research process, interviewing multiple generations of women in Labrador. She is a member of an editors' group started by Dr. Claire Wilkshire, one of her former students. This group, called "Twig", offers professional development and networking to professional and aspiring editors in St. John's. She has served for several years as Community Liaison member of the Women's Council to facilitate links with other feminist groups in the community and province.

Nominated for this award by her colleagues, Dr. Roberta Buchanan and Jean Guthrie, Phyllis Artiss is a powerful example of quiet leadership. Phyllis does not just serve others, she determinedly serves the values and ideals of a just society and it is that quality that is inspirational for others.