



Timeless contributions. Endless possibilities.

## Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards: A History



Georges Brosseau QC, Orval Belcourt and Dr. Herb Belcourt

From humble beginnings in Northern Alberta and through hard work, determination and their commitment to their people, three young Métis men, Herb Belcourt, Georges Brosseau and Orval Belcourt, became role models for success in their communities.

Dr. Herb Belcourt left home at the age of 15 to work in the logging camps around Edson, Alberta. By the 1960s and '70s, Belcourt Construction became one of the largest power line construction companies in Alberta. Herb has received numerous honours and awards, including an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Alberta, for both his business prowess and his generous philanthropic activities.

Born and raised in St. Paul, Alberta – the province's first Métis settlement – Georges Brosseau QC studied law at the University of Alberta. He was accepted into the Alberta bar in 1955 and was awarded the Queen's Counsel designation in 1972. He is now the senior partner of the Edmonton law firm Brosseau and Associates. He has a strong interest in and passion for education and has served as a trustee and chairman of the Edmonton Catholic School Board. He has been active and successful in property development in Edmonton, Cold Lake and Fort McMurray.

Orval Belcourt has dedicated his life to the betterment of his people. Encouraged by his brother to get involved, he joined the Métis Association of Alberta as Communications Director. In the mid-1970s, he began work with Alberta Social Services as a child welfare social worker. Orval is a strong advocate of social change based on his own life experiences.

In 1971, Georges, Herb and Orval participated in the founding of Canative Housing Corporation with the intent to provide affordable housing for Aboriginal people. Over 150 homes became available for rent to Métis people in Calgary and Edmonton and a critical need was fulfilled. This housing model has been duplicated in numerous communities across Canada.

In 2001, Canative Housing Corporation liquidated its housing portfolio. The funds were donated to the Edmonton Community Foundation into a permanent endowment fund. The Belcourt Brosseau Métis Awards Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation supports the post-secondary education and skills training of Métis Albertans in financial need. The endowed nature of the donation means the awards will be available in perpetuity.

Awards are granted at the discretion of the awards panel, based on a holistic assessment of a student's financial need, commitment, community involvement, maturity and likelihood of employment. Since 2002, the awards program has granted over \$3 million and supported over 400 Métis students in a broad spectrum of educational programs. The awards do provide financial assistance, but they also break down barriers, create opportunity and build pride in the Métis culture.

Dr. Herb Belcourt, Georges Brosseau, QC and Orval Belcourt, in partnership with the Edmonton Community Foundation, have established a legacy that will live on forever in the hearts and communities of the Métis people and through the generations of Métis students yet to come.