

## CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF WILLIAM COMMANDA'S WORK TO DEVELOP THE VISION FOR THE SACRED CHAUDIERE SITE – ASINABKA

Go to [Facebook William Commanda Legacy – Asinabka](#) page for all the photos.

### VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #13

Just remembering, after the OMB hearing that made me feel so ashamed of being a citizen of Ottawa - This is a minl para about all Grandfather did for the City and Algonquins, Indigenous and the rest of us:

William Commanda impacted the City of Ottawa at multiple tangible and intangible levels: he planted the City's Peace Tree, blessed the Multi-faith Community, his clout was recognized by three mayors; he was capped by one Chief of Police and presided over the inauguration of another. The City's current cultural program was developed in his home in the city. He hosted countless ceremonies and educational and peace building events, including Paddle for Peace at Victoria Island. In fact, his efforts influenced the UN Peace Day revival. He advocated on critical environmental issues: he hosted the Waterlife Workshop to draw attention to the pollution of the Ottawa River; he drew attention to the plight of the American Eel and the South March Highlands; he challenged uranium mining and megadumps and impacted critical decision-making; he challenged Domtar's mega hydro expansion project at the Chaudieres and initiated reports on undamming. His omni-presence and multiple contributions were acknowledged in the 2006 presentation of Key to the City on Victoria Island - because he triggered hope for a new way of life for all.

I remembered the first movie WC showed me - about Nez Percee Chief Joseph - From where the Sun stands today, I will fight no more forever - I don't know how many times I pondered that line - you may remember the history - when Am. Army Chief General Grant chased the people, in the end just women and children, to the Canadian border to capture them and WIN - voracious geed can never be satisfied I guess - Here, we can't leave one tiny Sacred Site in this country to the vision of sharing of Canada's most remarkable wise man?? How do we sleep?? Windmills will roll endlessly in the mind

This photo is from his Awakening Gathering in Perth - yes it was that cold and yet he sat outside - but there is something so sad in his eyes



#### VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #12.

Fast forwarding here - though there are many other stories to flesh out the evolution of the GWC Vision for the Sacred Site. Immediately after Grandfather Commanda's death in August 2011, others moved in to seize rights to the Sacred Chaudiere Site. Further to direction and constant exhortation from CAN partners and from my own deep awareness of how hard GWC had worked his entire life to leave a meaningful legacy for all, I was driven to writing an overview of the Asinabka vision for the site in June 2014 (I think by the ancestors at Pipestone Minnesota - I was on a bus travelling to Minneapolis, remember driving GWC to this sacred shared indigenous place in 1998, where his stellar character as a spiritual and political leader was acknowledged by AIM Leadership - and that report got written on the bus. Then, the ancestors awakened us again at Jacques Cartier Park and the September Heritage Sites note was written. As controversial development plans for the site advanced, several of us, including GWC's daughter and niece, filed an appeal against the City of Ottawa's Decision to rezone the Sacred Site from Parks and Open Space to Mixed Use Development viz from public space to private condos and retail, with massive international interests in the take over. Find the recent documents on our website. A few Sacred Sites - ceremony, challenge and resistance at every turn - these photos from the last couple of years



**VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #11.  
CONSOLIDATING planning in the 2010 VISION FOR ASINABKA.**

On February 22, William Commanda released his comprehensive report for the Vision for Asinabka. It received wide spread attention. and many citizens, some key players totally unknown to him facilitated its formal endorsement by the City of Ottawa in November 2010! Check out the full 46 page report on our website [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com) - here I am pasting the section pertaining to WILD SPACE in the Capital City that I sent the Free the Falls group who have been raising public awareness about special place:

But first Note the Photos - the First is the NCC team that videoed GWC in Kanata! You may have seen the Photo of GWC imprinted on the Peace Tower in their Sound and Light Show. Maybe NCC will remember why GWC's work was so important. Note also the evolving Cardinal depictions for the Sacred Site. AND note further, GWC kept up his other work in his Teaching Lodge at his home!

SUNDAY AUGUST 16, 2015 Discussion Circle on Victoria Island  
“Why are the Chaudiere Falls and the Islands Important to us?”

GREETINGS,

Thank you for your invitation to this discussion circle. I am sorry that I am unable to devote the afternoon to this; I have just returned from travels abroad, have had many emergencies to take care of, and need to prepare myself for the Ontario Municipal Board Hearing regarding the Sacred Chaudiere City and the City of Ottawa's Planning Decision tomorrow.

I am pasting below remarks that could be read out to participants to stimulate discussion and better understanding of Grandfather Commanda's vision. Thank you all for your efforts and support of his work.

Sincerely,

Romola  
circleofallnations@sympatico.ca

EXCERPT from Elder William Commanda's 2010 Vision for Asinabka Feb 22 – 10 Circle of All Nations Report, later endorsed by the City of Ottawa in November, 2010.  
“Wild Space in the Nation's Capital

We present a vision for a wild and inclusive space in the heart of the capital city, proclaiming, on a microcosmic level, a symbolic reconciliation with Nature and humankind. The vision for this area animates the ancient attitude of reverence, respect and responsibility for nature again.

Ottawa sits on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Peoples, and this confluence of the Ottawa, Rideau and Gatineau Rivers has long served as the meeting grounds of my ancestors. Asinabka, the sacred heartland, a cultural landscape of national historic significance, includes the Chaudière Rapids, Chaudière Island and Victoria Island.

A multi-faceted vision has been developed for this area to narrow the lens to focus on the two fundamental issues of our times: Mother Earth and Racial Harmony. Its core objective is to advance healing at three fundamental levels:

Healing individual and collective relationships with Mother Earth;  
Healing, strengthening and unifying Indigenous Peoples; and  
Healing relationships with all others

Its manifestation would constitute a dynamic, dramatic, and inspirational statement to the world.

Yes, for several decades now, Victoria Island has been identified as the site for a national Indigenous centre. Over recent years, a vision for healing, reconciliation and celebration has evolved, and internationally renowned Indigenous Architect Douglas J. Cardinal has developed conceptual designs for the place to house the vision.

After years of partnership building, it appeared that the vision stood on the threshold for implementation in 2004, but that stalled with federal leadership challenges and the subsequent Sponsorship Scandal. In August 2006, the National Capital Commission itself chose to make a statement of commitment for the project at the international Circle of All Nations gathering, but this momentum too stalled with the federal review and structural changes to that organization.

I have continued to work on this initiative. ....

While our focus right now is the establishment of the Asinabka National Indigenous Centre, in its larger form, the vision is a bold one for the future, comprising:

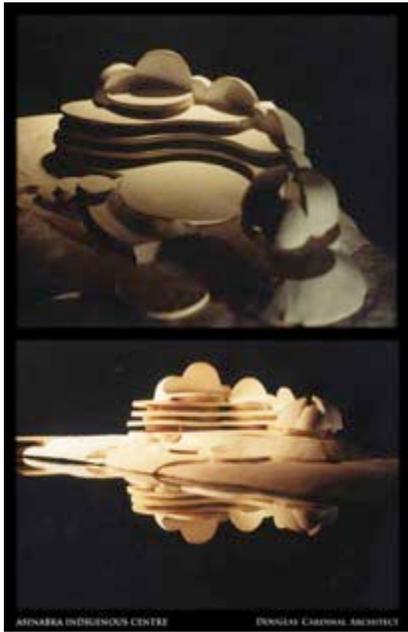
Freed Chaudière Rapids  
Reforested Chaudière Island  
An Indigenous Centre on Victoria Island  
A Peace-Building Conference Complex

The larger vision includes the development of a conference centre, a modern Tipi Hotel complex, to animate the ancient meeting grounds of the Algonquin peoples in the contemporary context, to serve as a sustainable site to host Aboriginal conferences, concerts, powwow and cross cultural training and peace building efforts.

The voice of the magnificent circular Chaudière Rapids has been silenced over the past two hundred years, yet she speaks loudly of the polluting of the waters of the countless rivers whose natural cleansing processes have been stifled by dams. It is time for us to be bold and innovative in our search for other viable sources of power, perhaps wind and solar; and it is time to restore the Chaudière Rapids to her wild freedom, in a symbolic statement of reconciliation with the waters of Mother Earth, a message that can reverberate to the world from this Nation's Capital.

Though much of the once beautiful Chaudière Island is now clad in concrete, after decades of industrialization and transformation, the vision for the area restores it to a fraction of its former state, now as an urban eco-park, reforested with the red and white pines that used to dominate the landscape of the Ottawa River Valley, promoting biodiversity, readily accessible to people from Ottawa and Gatineau, Ontario and Quebec, serving as a symbolic statement of reconciliation and unification; it would also present to the globe a vision for the greening of space in our ever increasingly urbanized world – offsetting urban concrete and heat with the regenerative energy of nature. Its refurbished warehouses can become artists' studios and contribute to the transformation of the energy in the heart of the country, and serve as a counter balance to the political and bureaucratic preoccupations of the capital city, and inspire a 'right brain-left brain' rebalancing. The heart of the people must return to the Source."





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VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #10 REMEMBERING DONALD MARSHALL JUNIOR WITH THIS POST. Also, 2009 was the year we introduced our Sustainable Relationships workshops on Victoria Island - You may know that GWC did Pipe Ceremonies at the Pre-Rio Earth Summit conference in France - that was when the global community (environmentalists, scientists and governments) awakened to the looming environmental crisis that Indigenous Peoples had been warning about formally since the forties - and the buzz word for work became Sustainable Development; BUT Circle of All Nations animated the deeper idea of Sustainable Relationships - and presented our joint platform of peace and environmental stewardship - noting of the inseparable relationship of people and earth - and drawing attention to the need for a much bigger understanding of sustainability.

ANYWAY, we hosted several events on Victoria Island, including two with Plenty Canada; and our most special partner in this work was DONALD MARSHALL JUNIOR - Today, we acknowledge the anniversary of his passing - In our estimation, HE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT VOICE of our day in Canada - his fight for truth and justice benefits all Canadians in the Wrongfully Convicted initiative; his story and the Marshall Justice Inquiry, the Helen Betty Osborne/Manitoba Justice Inquiry and the OKA crisis played the pivotal role in drawing attention to Aboriginal INJustice - these resulted in much job creation in the nineties - but substantial change is yet to manifest; this is why Junior joined forces with Grandfather Commanda's unfunded Circle of All Nations work to advance change and non-marginalization of First Peoples in advancing justice, racial harmony, peace building and restorative practices - given the recent reports of the Correctional Investigator, and the general state of global affairs, you will realize how critically important the continuation of this work at an internationally relevant Indigenous Centre at the Sacred Chaudiere Site is today. (Even today in SA, I am asked about restorative justice practices - this approach was launched globally through the pain and tears and tremendous creativity of Indigenous Peoples and much more work is critically needed).

DONALD MARSHALL JUNIOR also raised the marker on Indigenous Rights to the grand natural resources of this land with the Eel case - Is it not interesting how this ancient magical NOMAD fish, now receiving so much attention with Species at Risk and Endangered Species work, is linked with the struggle for the rights, voice and place of Indigenous Peoples - Eels also figure prominently in our fight to Undam the Sacred Chaudiere Falls - and protect ASINABKA for the manifestation of the Commanda vision. (Eels also feature in the AJLN Donald Marshall Senior Camp video!)

Mrs Caroline Marshall died last Christmas - and we honour her sacrifices and those of her family in the Junior Marshall story.

You will note in the photos I post here another remarkable and globally prominent Indigenous leader - Architect DOUGLAS CARDINAL - he has been passionately committed to the manifestation of Indigenous presence at this ancient meeting place - and engaged with Grandfather and Junior at countless Circle of All Nations events on Victoria Island and in Maniwaki.

I also note the presence of our old friend KIRK WIPPER in the photos - he is the Founder of the Canadian Canoe Museum - he too was a passionate supporter of our work - more about this another time.





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VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #9. 2009 was a big year of further outreach on the Indigenous Centre file - you will find his passionate letters to then Governor General Michaëlle Jean (2009 05 08) and the Queen on the Docs page of our [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com) website - We realize that this work of education and transformation takes time to evolve and we note that Ms Jean, now Chancellor of the University of Ottawa, paid heed to his message - the opening of the William Commanda Pavillon last October 2014 was testament to the emerging understanding of the depth and relevance of Indigenous Wisdom and William Commanda's contributions to the academic world. We fully expect this understanding to grow exponentially - and one day be fully manifested in the Asinabka vision. If you have been moved by Grandfather Commanda's work and passion, please join us in sharing and educating others about its profound global importance!! So here the photos show the Kindergarten Dropout become Dr. Commanda, Officer of the Order of Canada, and acknowledged at the UofO; even from his hospital bed, he conducted business, writing to and then meeting the Queen - the awakening continues!





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AUGUST 3 and FOUR YEARS SINCE THE PASSING OF GRANDFATHER WILLIAM COMMANDA - Posting a few photos here that I don't think I have shared before - our buddy was endlessly on focus with his prayer you will see - and then I was thinking about what to share - and I happened upon this old note (not sure where/when it originated)- and its says a lot about our current focus - and I note that in the notice about his passing we suggested people do what they could to support his vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site in lieu of flowers - maybe this is the moment:

While Grandfather William Commanda's physical elements passed away (William Commanda, Algonquin spiritual leader, dead at 97, Ottawa Citizen, Aug. 4, 2011) his inspired vision for the establishment of an Indigenous healing centre on his peoples sacred and traditional territory at Victoria Island and associated Chaudière Falls, did not. It did not and will not because his vision contains one essential human element, that of healing. It did not because it also gives vision and voice to Canadian author, John Raulston Saul (A Fair Country) that, at its root, Canada is a tripartite nation. French, English and Indigenous. And I, for one, cannot think of a better way to demonstrate this fact.

Algonquin elder Dr. William Commada's inspired vision for Victoria and Chaudière Islands, envisions an Indigenous healing center, where peoples the world over can gather to seek forgiveness and reconciliation. From a cultural tourism perspective, his vision should be seen as a future economic boon. At his funeral were dignitaries from South Africa to Chile, to mention but a few. The immensity of this economic opportunity reminded me of a lament I heard a few years ago from the architect of the Museum of Civilization, Douglas Cardinal, when he said, "here we are in Ottawa, with embassies from every country

in the world, yet we have no embassy for our own Indigenous peoples.” Imagine how many would seek it out if we did have one?

Grandfather Commanda’s healing vision also foresees a future where the sacred Chaudière Rapids can run freely again, to symbolize reconciliation with the waters; where the concrete clad Chaudière Island can once again become a forested wild space in the heart of the country, to serve as a messenger to the rest of the world that we can look for ways to offset urban concrete and unbalanced heating of the earth. Included in his vision, which he scrolled onto a piece of birch bark, is the development of an historic interpretive centre; where Indigenous peoples can regain their strength and heritage in an Indigenous centre dedicated to their development; where they can share their worldviews, their cultures, their foods and their dances with their sisters and brothers in the spirit of; A Circle of All Nations – A Culture of Peace; and where feet can once again pound their prayers and reverence into these sacred islands of fire and mist where the spirit of the pow wows of old ignite and inspire.

Order of Canada recipient Grandfather William Commanda’s inspired vision offers up a dream where future human, environmental, cultural and economic fruits will not only benefit Mother Earth but ultimately all of humanity, including Indigenous Peoples and the citizens of the National Capital Region alike. Seeds of his vision will ultimately give birth to a new generation, a generation of hope and reconciliation. A generation rooted in the sacred, which is both forward looking and focused on the health and well-being of all of creation.

If one of Canada’s earliest explorers, Samuel de Champlain, took the time to record the importance of the sacredness of Victoria Island, and in particular Chaudière Falls, why can’t we? The time has come for Canada to find a true path of reconciliation with its First Peoples. Grandfather William Commanda’s inspired vision provides a peaceful way forward to achieve that goal; indeed it could be gel that ultimately holds us all together.

Dr. Commanda’s inspired vision sets out to heal past transgressions. Knowing of no other vision as compelling as Grandfather William Commanda’s, the time to muster the political will to turn this inspired vision for Victoria and Chaudière Islands into a reality is now. You can help Grandfather William Commanda’s inspired vision become reality by contacting the Prime Minister directly and exhorting him to weave Grandfather William Commanda’s inspired vision into his own political legacy; as the Prime Minister who moved beyond offering up apologetic words to actually taking action. Your children’s, children will thank-you for doing so.

If there was ever a vision worthy of posthumous support, it is the inspired vision of Grandfather William Commanda’s for Victoria and Chaudière Islands.



I should have labelled this VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #8. It is wonderful to see that GWC reached almost 6 thousand people at this special time - and that so many folk shared his message - this is so helpful, because we have never had any funding or special communications expertise to spread his message and to keep his legacy work alive and spreading - you his friends help tremendously to keep Grandfather Commanda Encore Vivant!! I know for a fact we are remembering his in France and South Africa today - wonder what is happening in Canada!! This photo - GWC showing off his emerging teaching lodge to Wendy Mamimele from the South African High Commission office in Canada in June 2001 - I remember she had a health issue at the time- and GWC said a special prayer for her - see, he was doing the global connect thing from Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg then - many know he put Maniwaki Quebec on the global map!



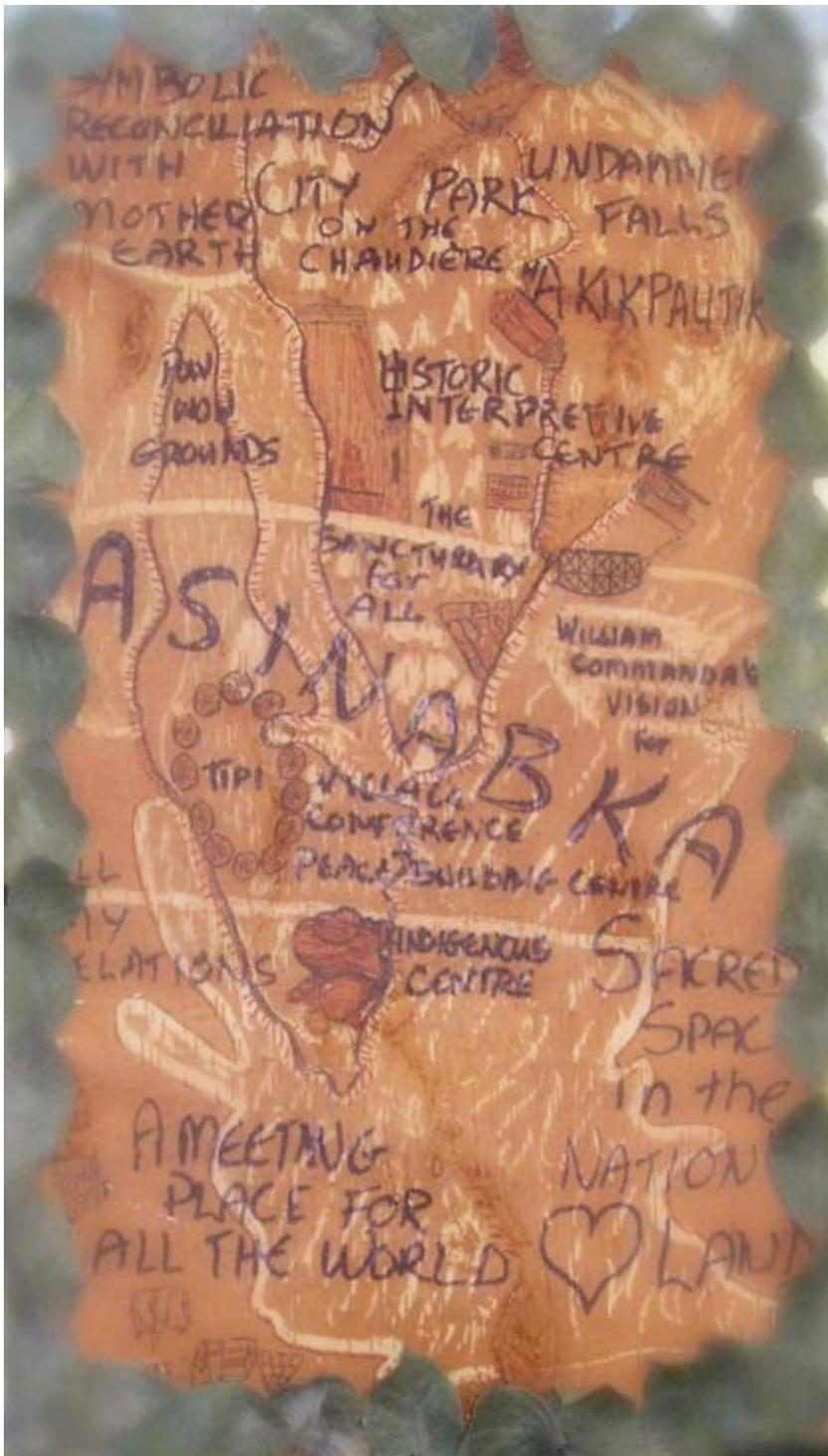
#### VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #7.

On June 21, 2006, Grandfather Commanda was presented the Key to the City of Ottawa on Victoria Island, and he presented to the public this vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site on birchbark.

In November 2006, Circle of All Nations, together with ICE, hosted the Waterlife Workshop, focused on raising attention on the deplorable state of the Ottawa River - and drawing attention to water conservation - note CAN had focussed on Water during the 2004 gathering - this was passionate concern of GWC's - how many times he pointed out that we could do without food for some time - but water was a different story. It was an incredible workshop, with powerful presentations by Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge holders; most folk will remember the Elders praying without stop, when the smoke from their sacred fires set the alarms off at the hotel; most folk will remember the Full Moon prayer at Victoria Island; they will also remember the GWC birthday party at Odawa. Further to all the attention raised to the contamination of the Ottawa River, the City was fined - and its \$50,000 fine kick started the work of the Ottawa Riverkeepers. A separate report will be provided on this catalyst workshop.

During this workshop, someone presented a paper regarding Domtar's consultation regarding expanding the hydro electric plant at the Chaudieres dramatically. The consensus of the participants was that this should be strongly contested, particularly in view of the GWC vision for the ancient sacred site. The massive campaign to ensure proper public consultation on this sensitive file resulted in the termination of the Domtar plan - though the damming issue was not resolved. Extensive information about this work is available on the Asinabka site (2006 - 08).

Note also that the plight of the Eels became another big part of the river conservation theme - GWC's remarks regarding its inclusion on the Endangered Species list remain very influential nationally. It is interesting to note that seven eels revealed their presence in the vicinity of Victoria Island exactly a year after Grandfather's death; and that a major report on the American Eel was released on June 3, 2015, at the Ontario Municipal Board hearing of appeals against the City of Ottawa zoning and planning decisions at the Sacred Chaudiere Site commenced.





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VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #6.

I refer you to the note entitled "2005-05-23 UPDATE VICTORIA ISLAND INDIGENOUS CENTRE" for William Commanda's update to Algonquin elders on the project between 2002 and 2005 - see [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com).

Heritage Canada funded the NCC \$50,000 to engage Douglas Cardinal to develop the conceptual designs for the VI project to the next level and to hire former Parks Canada CEO Tom Lee to develop a draft

Memorandum of Understanding for Cabinet in support of the project - he consulted extensively with Elder Commanda (I was present throughout) and with federal leadership to ensure a viable proposal. This is a critical document in the ASINABKA file, and reflects very serious negotiations. In 2005, Elder Commanda brought this to the attention of new Prime Minister Paul Martin at the Kelowna Round Table Discussions - Note that he had already met to discuss the project with then AFN Chief Phil Fontain and with all the other Aboriginal national leaders (Inuit and Metis, Women, Non-Status) and that he had gifted all FN communities with copies of his book, Learning From A Kindergarten Dropout via Indian Affairs distribution - it includes discussion of Indigenous Centre Project. In August 2006, NCC Chairman, late Marcel Beaudry asked to attend the annual Circle of All Nations Gathering at Elder Commanda's home in Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, and he offered the following statement: (a video tape of his remarks is available in the Circle of All Nations archives):

#### MARCEL BEAUDRY

In August 2006, at the annual Circle of All Nations International Gathering, NCC Chairman Marcel Beaudry affirmed that:

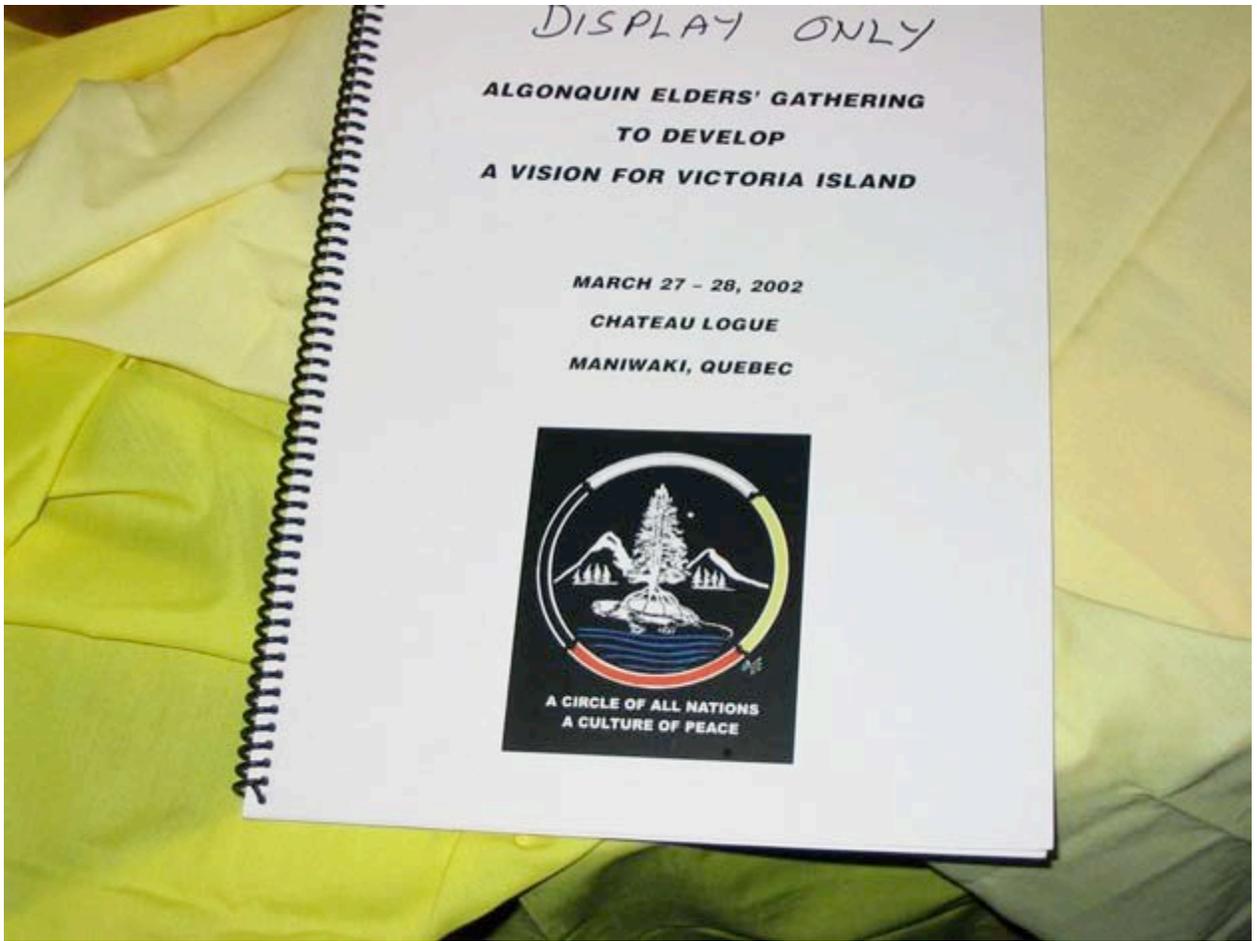
- NCC had been working a long time, perhaps 15 years, but intensely over the last 7, for Aboriginals to be recognized once and for all in the National Capital Region
- In Ontario, English culture predominates, and in Quebec, French, but NCC felt the Aboriginals did not have a place, and noted its role to facilitate this
- NCC wanted to recognize Aboriginals by building a centre of national stature
- NCC noted the area is sacred to Aboriginals
- Aboriginals themselves should decide what should take place there: healing, spirituality, education etc
- The Federal Government would invest \$100 million dollars on the building (our note: includes remedial environmental work), and \$11 million a year on programs and services
- Two Foundations would be established to implement the project: one to oversee construction and maintenance with 50% Federal and 50% Aboriginal control; the other under Aboriginal management for programs and services
- NCC noted that Aboriginals were here much earlier than the French and English, and moving forward on this project would finally see all three founding nations represented in the capital city
- NCC also acknowledged Elder Commanda's respected status across the country amongst Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples; and Douglas Cardinal's unique architectural vision, and long term commitment to the project
- (The sentiments expressed are consistent with the Three Figure Sharing Wampum Belt, with Aboriginal Peoples assuming their rightful position and share within the capital - our note)

YOU WILL RECALL that following the outreach to the then liberal leadership and the PMs Chretien and Martin, we had the federal Sponsorship Scandal and eruption of multiple political divisions and sadly the Indigenous work fell victim to federal disarray and subsequent policy initiatives with decidedly hostile approaches to Indigenous issues.





VIA Misc consultation on the report with children and yes, that's Robert Davidson, Haida artist, his wife and chief - WC shared his prayer from coast to coast and with so many, young and old





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#### VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #5

These are not my best photos from the early 2000s, but you will note here a sprinkling of folk GWC invited to discussions on the Vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site. Yes, that the late Indigenous Historian, Olive Dickason; these meetings at his lodge in Maniwaki and countless others elsewhere - Quebec, Ontario and internationally (e.g. SA, US, Germany, Bahamas) led to the compilation of a mini report which was presented to all the Quebec Algonquin communities, including the Barrier Lake communities, at an Elders gathering at an ancestral burial site near Chateau Logue, in March 2003; a special discussion was arranged for Pikwakanagan First Nations. Circle of All Nations produced a finalized report incorporating the direction of the elders, and created a five circle diagram outlining the core vision and integrated themes and priorities. Please check the early reports on the [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com) website for details. The cohesiveness and integrity of the vision have resonated for countless other people over the past decade; the core principles have been animated at Grandfather's annual gatherings, at Sustainable Relationship and Paddle for Peace and Pipe Ceremonies at Victoria Island, and they continue to resonate and matter to many Algonquin and countless non-Indigenous peoples deeply concerned with Indigenous issues and wisdom, with environmental stewardship and peace building, consistent with Grandfather's animation of the Wampum Belt heritage; and still deeply committed to seeing this manifested at the Sacred Chaudiere Site - in a world of increasing environmental catastrophe, war, violence and inequality, Grandfather's legacy is one powerful statement of hope, love, respect and inclusion.





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- [William Commanda Legacy - Asinabka](#) Re: the Photo with the Hon. Sheila Copps 2003 - in my opinion, during this period, there was much hope that the energy that was emerging with a series of National Conferences of the Dept of Can Heritage - with Aboriginal well entrenched in the centre, and engaged with all others, under the prayers of Grandfather and other Elders, and under the leadership of Hon Sheila Copps - had the greatest promise of advancing the kind of country anticipated by the Seven Fires Prophecy - one of brotherhood and sisterhood and integration - unfortunately, this got stymied. People like Alex Janvier and Tantoo Cardinal were there; and here in this photo are Mohak Elders Ernie Benedict and Paul Skanks and Inuit Elder Maria with GWC - while these are not my best photos, they contribute to the visual documentation of the massive effort and outreach to develop the vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site - the work will indeed continue



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- [William Commanda Legacy - Asinabka](#) PS Following the Elders discussions, the 2003 report was compiled and Elder Commanda communicated his vision with multiple parties: the GG, PM, Ministers of Canadian Heritage and Indian Affairs, NCC, AFN etc - note the 2003 August/September link on [Asinabka.com](#) for details on this official outreach. It resulted in further development with the NCC, under the direction of the then Minister in Charge of the NCC, Sheila Coppins - NOTE that at that time, the NCC was the responsibility of Canadian Heritage; during Minister Cannon's and Baird's time, NCC became the responsibility of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.



#### VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA VIA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #4

In May 2000, Grandfather Commanda hosted the Circle of All Nations Millennium Gathering. It was an international gathering focused on social justice, racial harmony and peace building, Indigenous wisdom

and respect for Mother Earth, held at Nepean Place in the National Capital Region (overlooking the Ottawa River, and note, Nepean means Place Where We Sleep in Algonquin, this indicative of what an important meeting/gathering place this junction of the three rivers - Ottawa, Rideau and Gatineau - at the circular Chaudiere Falls was from Time Immemorial for the Indigenous Peoples of the continent). The Gathering was a microscopic statement of the kind of issues and energies GWC wanted to see embraced in his country and globally, at the ASINABKA centre; Indigenous prophecy carriers, Elders Martin Gashwaseoma and Chief Arvol Looking Horse, participated. On this occasion, then, Elder Commanda made a special public statement about this work and the importance of a Healing and Peace Building Centre in the capital city to then Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, and his Excellency John Ralston Saul; the statement was endorsed and reinforced by a Narrangaset representative from the American North East; by Late Frank Decontie from Kitigan Zibi; by the Hopi and Mayan Elders; Wolf Project representatives; South Africans; and others; we shall post other photos of the circle discussion and a report on the blueprint ideas of the gathering later. Grandfather followed this up with a personal meeting with the GG, the representative of the Crown, at Rideau Hall; note that later he also brought his wishes to the attention of her Majesty and Prince Charles. My key point here is that Indigenous leadership from North America brought their vision and priorities to the attention of the representative of the Honour of the Crown - an inclusive vision embracing all occupants of NA. Note that world renowned Indigenous architect DOUGLAS CARDINAL participated; note also that DONALD MARSHALL JUNIOR was presented with a WOLF PROJECT AWARD at this Gathering, and he too had an opportunity to discuss his priorities with the GG. (Chief Arvol Looking Horse, President Mandela and GWC are other recipients of Wolf Project Awards). We launched the Lucie Ouhmet "Encounter with an Algonquin Sage" NFB documentary at a special event at the then Canadian Museum of Civilization. Garnet Challenger hosted a concert, and WAYQUAY sang "Grandfather sent me on a walk, to make medicine out of pain!" and the thunder beings responded. One of Wayquay's songs exhorted us to Navigate! and so we continue the journey William Commanda launched us on those many years ago - to the Source!



**"A Circle of All Nations:  
A Culture of Peace"**

Our Shared Peace Principles include the following:

- The United States will continue to support the self-determination and sovereignty of all nations.
- All nations are equal and have the right to self-determination.
- The United States will support the peace, stability, and security of all nations.

Our Shared Peace Principles include the following:

- Peace and stability are the foundation of a strong and prosperous world.
- The United States will continue to support the self-determination and sovereignty of all nations.
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**"A Circle of All Nations:  
A Culture of Peace"**



### VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA - CHRONOLOGICAL STORYTELLING #3

After Grandfather's discussions with Algonquin leadership in 1998, he and Indigenous Architect Douglas Cardinal (who had put the Indigenous Centre idea on the map with the National Capital Commission and its then Chair Jean Pigot in 1970) consulted with many folk and we developed the conceptual plans and core vision for the site. Then we made visits to all the Algonquin communities in Quebec, as well as Golden Lake/Pikwakanagan to discuss them. Elders Pierre and Jeannette Papatie and Late Joe Wabie helped organize our visits - we met with elders and youth throughout.

You will note that Grandfather Commanda shared the messages of the Wampum Belts; you will note that Douglas Cardinal also presented his conceptual designs to the people. The youth also shared their concerns and priorities: note the poster. We did one of the consultations in a youth centre - the next time William and I visited the community, it had been burnt down - the need for healing and hope remains palpable in Indian country - and it is our deep awareness and understanding of this that drives our efforts to advance the William Commanda vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site - Indigenous Peoples need to reconnect with the ancient sacred site in the heart of their country, and the rest of us need to acknowledge and embrace their rights to presence in the capital city. We need Indigenous energy to animate the ancient meeting place; and we all need to come together to forge new ideas for a future of hope for humanity.

Literally thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples came together at the annual Circle of All Nations gatherings and sparked countless creative initiatives - I shall track the trails of many of these in future notes; suffice it to say that Grandfather Commanda saw the opportunity for the coming together of the four symbolic races to forge a better future for all, as projected and promised by the SEVEN FIRES PROPHECY, in the ancient meeting place of HIS direct ancestors - the Chaudiere Site. His was not a vision for further expropriation, privatization and capitalist imposition of European malls, Little

Amsterdams and condos on a unique sacred site - there are countless other places for that; he spent his entire life challenging that ideology; yet he was also inclusive and forward thinking - in sync with the Laws of Nature; and Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of all ages and backgrounds "got it". If this work interest you then PLEASE SHARE THESE POSTS AND ANIMATE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THESE IDEAS SO PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND BETTER HOW FUTURIST THIS VISION IS and take their place in the work - also check out our websites [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com) and [www.circleofallnations.ca](http://www.circleofallnations.ca) for much more info





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Virtual Institute ASINABKA - Chronology Storytelling #2 = During our 2001 trip to Nova Scotia, I did a presentation at a Correctional Service of Canada event - and GWC did the opening prayer - my friend Donald Marshall Junior joined us; it was not an easy experience for him, given his experiences within that system - still he was valiant in his commitment to do the same bridge building GWC was engaging in and in addition to the Marshall Inquiry and its recommendations for better services of Aboriginal Peoples throughout the Criminal Justice System, his fight for truth and justice inspired the Wrongfully Convicted project - and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people benefit from that. Junior took GWC to the Shubenacadie Residential School - or should I say the shell of a place haunted by a deep and ugly angst - and GWC did a prayer there. Both these most remarkable of our leaders knew that there was need for deep healing and transformation in the land of their ancestors - and they committed to advancing the shift. Junior remained passionate about the vision for the Sacred Chaudiere Site, making two trips to our Circle of All Nations events in Ottawa even as his health was failing rapidly - in other notes, I shall share more photos and memories. Here I want to note also that we stopped at Burnt Church on this trip to the East - and contemplated the other great and ground breaking contribution Junior made - the affirmation of Indigenous right to their grand natural resources, with his EELS/Fishing case. We also informed the Atlantic Chiefs Policy Group about the vision for Victoria Island at that time.

So, Note that the vision for the SCS includes building on the tremendous contributions and sacrifices of DMJ, (I would think THE Canadian hero), making it the think tank for better ways forward for humanity, and a central place for honouring such contributions. And as such, it is relevant to all Indigenous Peoples. So, our commitment to ASINABKA is also a part of our commitment to the Donald Marshall Junior legacy.





**VIRTUAL INSTITUTE ASINABKA - Chronology Storytelling - #1:**

In 1998, Grandfather William Commanda consulted formally with the Algonquin Nations Tribal Council and other Algonquin groups re: animating the Sacred Chaudiere Site as a global healing and peace building centre - for reconciliation and healing with Mother Earth and the Waters, amongst Indigenous Peoples - (First Nations, Inuit and Metis, and with Algonquins serving as host nation); and with all others.

Note that he had already been doing work at Victoria Island formally since the 80s, including canoe projects with the National Capital Commission; and healing and ceremonial work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people at the old Carbide Mill Site. Note that his outreach was extensive and Indigenous peoples from beyond Canada, and huge numbers of non-Aboriginal peoples were part of his global outreach and they all played critical roles in the development of his vision for the ancient meeting place.

This photo is of Grandfather Commanda surveying the Gulf of the Saint Lawrence - the area where his ancestor Tessouat, from the Ottawa River Valley, acknowledged as a paramount chief amongst the "Algonquins" of the American North East, welcomed Champlain (Tadoussac) - In the spirit of peace building, the people danced and sang their prayer and welcome and fed the newcomers - that was the first treaty initiated by the Indigenous - and it is this energy that William Commanda regenerated in his animation of the Three Figure Welcoming and Sharing Wampum Belt - "My ancestors welcomed them, and we will not stop honouring that commitment, no matter how difficult it may be at times". He implanted his prayer for peace at the ancient meeting place of his ancestors, at the SACRED CHAUDIERE SITE, and regenerated prayer, ceremony and himself cooked wild meat to nurture the hungry at Victoria Island - especially on New and Full Moons, equinox and solstice moments - reanimating connection with the cosmic dimension.



Today, 4 June 1613, Guess What - Champlain canoed past the Chaudiere Falls - Akikpautik - and the Indigenous People were praying at the Sacred Site - today, they came and helped us with the OMB appeal against the development plans at the Sacred Chaudiere Site! So folk, take some time to really understand what it is all about - [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com) - a few memories







[William Commanda Legacy - Asinabka](#)

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