### A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS PRESENTATION LEGACY WORK OF INDIGENOUS ELDER

WILLIAM COMMANDA AND ROMOLA!

#### 2021 CAN APR 11 FACEBOOK LIVE VIDEO EVENT

**CAN Facebook Live Video Event** 

Session 4: Romola's Resume and Reflections on Systemic Change

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Grandfather William Commanda Legacy 2020 A *Circle of All Nations* Geo Cosmic Prayer and Reflection

Iconic symbols of importance to the William Commanda worldview are incorporated in this image:
Grandmother Moon and Morning Star, invoking the spirit of fire, enlightenment and the cosmic;
Asin and the Steeping Giant commenorating Earth retation in rock;
Air, wind, movement animating water life emergent from the oxygen rocks of the Kichisppi Ottawa River;
Birch, woff, eel and turtle honouring evolution, plant and animal life, Turtle Island and
Canoe acknowledging the ultimate nurturer, Mother Earth, and symbolizing the enigmatic Journey of Life

Graphic created by Miduran Murugathasan for Circle of All Nations © Romola@circleofallnations.ca



### A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS OJIGKWANONG PRAYER

Grandfather William Commanda Legacy 2020 A Circle of All Nations Geo Cosmic Prayer and Reflection

Iconic symbols of importance to the William Commanda worldview are incorporated in this image:

Grandmother Moon and Morning Star, invoking the spirit of fire, enlightenment and the cosmic;

Asin and the Sleeping Giant commemorating Earth creation in rock;

Air, wind, movement animating water life emergent from the oxygen rocks of the Kichisippi Ottawa River,

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#### Heritage de Grand-Père William Commanda

Un cercle de prière de réflexion Génomiques de toutes les Nations.

Des symboles emblématiques d'importance pour la vision du monde de William Commanda sont incorpores dans cette

Grand-Mère la Lune et es Étoiles du matin, invoquant l'esprit de feu, d'illumination et de cosmique;

Asin et le Giant endormi commémorant la Création Terrestre dans la roche:

L'air, le vent, le mouvement animant la vie de l'eau émergent des roches et de l'oxygène du Kichisippi rivière des

Le bouleau, le loup, l'anguille et la tortue honorant l'évolution, la vie végétale et animale.

L'ile de la Tortue et le canoé reconnaissant l'ultime nourricier, la Terre Mère, et symbolisant le voyage énigmatique de la vie

# 2021 CAN FB LIVE VIDEO EVENT April 11 - 1 pm

Romola's Mini Retrospective: 24th Anniversary of my First Encounter with Elder William Commanda

SYNOPSIS OF AGENDA

UNTANGLE TO FLOW – FLOW TO UNTANGLE

#### BRIDGE BUILDING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

- Our First Meeting Me then a Public Servant of 17 years! (considered by some a spy for Government!)
  - Aboriginal Justice Learning Network April 1997 Elders Gathering
    - 1980s decade of Aboriginal Justice Inquiries across the country
    - The post OKA era; Post also the RCAP; New Federal Legislation
    - Aboriginal Corrections Strategy Aboriginal Peoples in Federal Corrections and coordination of the Prairie Region Strategy
      - Native Liaison Officers, Elders, Aboriginal Staffing Strategy, Cross Cultural Training, Healing Lodges
      - Task Force On Federally Sentenced Women Okima Ochi Healing Lodge and the Elder (Oak?) in the kitchen "I teach my daughters to respect themselves"; Flew with DPM Herb Gray to opening; wanted to include Cree in his speech; rain and Tears of the Ancestors
    - First Nations Tri-Partite Policing Policy; Urban Aboriginal Policing and first Forum ('96)
    - Aboriginal Justice Strategy and Aboriginal Justice Learning Network

#### TVISIT ELDER COMMANDA AT HIS HOME

- I had been working in Aboriginal Justice since 1987. in the Prairies and nationally; I was inviting William Commanda to serve as Elder for our Elders' Gathering – one in a series of 10 that I coordinated across the country
- I had already met Donald Marshall Junior he was part of my AJLN team of Storytellers – he, Clayton Sandy, Freda Ens, Susan Swan and many elders were part of the Storytelling team – Yes, we did Storytelling before mainstream awakened to that that word
- I had to call for directions 3 times before I found this Elder with a red headband in his super hot living room – I realized in an instant that I had met someone in a different league from anyone else I had met before
- Most folk who met William Commanda have felt exactly the same!

### WHAT'S SACRED AND WHAT'S SPIRIT TEXT?

Gathering & Sharing

Deep Reflection

Teaching







#### SACRED WAMPUM BELT CARRIER

- April 11, 1997 We had a long afternoon sharing stories I think William Commanda was somewhat surprised that he was having an okay conversation with a bureaucrat – Remember, he had spent his 20 years as chief, and more besides, challenging the federal government and Indian Affairs.
- In fact, later, he told me about his conversation with the Prime Minister Trudeau in 1968 – about the word Justice vs JustUs that, yes, WC coined; that was the time when the PM told GWC that he had heard about his problems with his Dept of Justice – WC was filing his tax returns in the garbage pail and the RCMP were after him!
- Here is the famous photo: the pair sharing a plate of beans, when WC was asked to welcome the new PM WC welcomed him to his **Territory** and his Country it is reflective of the spirit of the Three Firgure Welcoming and Sharing Belt of 1700.

### THE WELCOME OF THE ALGONQUIN PEOPLE OF THE EASTERN SEABOARD TO THE NEWCOMERS

Re-Affirmed in 1968



And Repeatedly Thereafter



### AND TO ALL OTHERS, INCLUDING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

His Holiness, Dalai Lama PresidentNelsonMandela

The Queen Elizabeth







#### SEVEN FIRES PROPHECY WAMPUM BELT

- Several hours into our meeting, William Commanda suddenly decided to show me something – he went to his bedroom and then returned with a bag – and then laid out on the carpet in his jampacked living room the Sacred Algonquin Wampum Belts (these are not the later belts made of manufactured belts created by the British and others as commodity and modern artifacts and sometimes lightly spoken of as wampum diplomacy
- I was plummeted into a "sacred" moment and an epic story the Seven Fires Wampum Belt was created before the arrival of the Newcomers to North Americal, and prophecied the changes and challenges that would come into the lives of the First Peoples in the ensuing centuries its messages are live and unfolding to this day Witness Covid
- This moment cemented my entrenchment with the William Commanda work

### FROM CAREER WOMAN TO CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS

- My Seven Fires Prophecy moment launched me on a journey of a new sort and one of highs and lows, one of incredible gifts and insights and also one of sacrifice;
- Sadly, this sometimes also demands that one imposes sacrifice on others; this is not always an easy burden to carry it was not for William, it is not for me
- I found work in government could only go so far to animate transformation so I moved onto developing the Circle of All Nations with William Commanda an unfunded global eco peace community dedicated to advancing Respect and Reverence for Mother Earth, Indigenous Wisdom, Social Justice and Racial Harmony/Peace Building
- This conflates to Environment/Peace then you wake up and realize they are the same thing you cannot language one without the other
- It is extremely challenging to awaken people to this realization and this is where I am at now
- COVID is trying to help with the wake up. This is the Message of the Border Crossing Wampum Belt which teaches that everything is Inter-Related

### IDENTITY! FROM ON AND OFF RESERVE, CROWN LAND - TO TERRITORY

- In the nineties we were still entrenched in terminology and categories that no one understood and terminology that often made no sense so there was Indian, reserve, off-reserve, status, non-status, native, then First Nations, Inuit, Metis
- Also, the First Peoples of the Land fell into a shifting range of departments "in charge of them" from the times when the first PM John A. Macdonald made himself of Indian Affairs to Northern Affairs, Natural Resources, Immigration and in the nineties, FN and Inuit were separated from Metis and Non-Status though, as in the case of WC's family, Non-Status could be more pure blood than the Reserve "Indian"
- I think I became William Commanda's political message because he could say, She's Indian, NOT me!

### AB - ORIGINAL?? AS PER THE LATIN AB - FROM?

- As noted in 1968, William Commanda welcomed people to his Territory
- When Canada, the Colony of Britain, brought the "Constitution" and
  "Charter of Rights and Freedoms" home in 1982, it was working hard to
  reconcile its early newcomer setter colonizer roots with its French/English
  history of conflict and rivalry, to be assuaged with Bilingualism, with it post
  world war larger European immigrants and its growing multicultural
  community, to be included by a new Multiculturalism Act but the problem
  with the First Inhabitants of the Land now emerged as a big challenge
- I say, William Commanda and his friend Jules Sioui were the root cause of this problem

### CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN NATIONS GOVERNMENT

- Exactly as the United Nations was taking shape in the mid forties, so was Jules Sioui uniting and developing the voice and presence of the First Peoples of North America and asserting this directly to the Secretary General Trygve Lie (Norway who held office from February 1946 to his resignation in November 1952)
- William Commanda became actively engaged, and in the fifties became the Supreme Chief of this NAING – just because we could not find mention of Jules Sioui in the Indian Affairs library does not mean he did not lever the rights movement of NA – and he was a political prisoner too – whose life was drained by his 78 day hunger strike, held without warrant in the end till William Commanda secured his release
- Sadly the efforts of 30 years were betrayed but still, the seeds for civil rights were planted by the blood, sweat and tears of Indigenous, decimated though they had been by the multiple trails of tears across North America

#### ABORIGINAL TO INDIGENOUS

- Well, I was working in Aboriginal Justice in the early nineties, and as a public servant, was now grateful to be serving the First Peoples earlier I had considered myself fortunate to be serving my new homeland as parole officer responsible for public security and rehabilitation of the "bad dudes" but this was more meaningful till I was obliged to learn I was a "visible minority", that First Peoples were lumped into my "category" and they did not like it in fact, I found they resented me more than the original colonizers!
- But William Commanda was busy teaching me about Colonization and as I began to understand his history, so I finally began to understand mine both as South African and Indian Yes, it was WC who introduced me to The Mahatma Gandhi!
- And I began to understand how strongly his notion of identity was political as well as land based.

#### INDIGENOUS AND GLOBAL

- Why must we be called Ab Original, asked William Commanda (and Alberta Cree Elder Peter Ocheese!) We are **ORIGINAL!**
- SO then we studied the history of the First Peoples of the Eastern Seaboard tracking their history back 12 thousand years – and traced the 84 nations of Algonquian ancestry who had left their mark across the continent in language
- We consciously started using INDIGENOUS in all our correspondence with Government (you know by know, I was William Commanda's speech writer but he quality controlled every nuance!)
- Also note, from the launch of the First United Nations Conference of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Cry of the Earth, where he made the opening presentation, William exerted influence in this forum – in 2019 the UN caught up with his Indigenous Language platform – fully trilingual, he set the mark by speaking in Algonquin at this global forum
- We asserted Indigenous as political at every turn now we have Indigenous Affairs!

#### **ORGANIC IDENTITY - MAMIWININI**

- I am Mamiwinini We travel every day
- Body in Motion like the Cosmic critical for cognitive functioning
- Reserves deprived people of this "brain power"
- But William Commanda was Body in Motion Unconfinable and borderless
- Symbolized by the Canoe
- Reaffirmed in the fight for the protection of the American Eel we wrote the pivotal paper to ignite Species at Risk protection in 2008
- This theme was re-presented in the 2017 International Anthropology Conference at University of Ottawa that honoured WC and profiled Movement

### ALGONQUINS OF THE OTTAWA RIVER WATERSHED

- In 2000, the Mayor of Gatineau, and head of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, with a City Hall called Maison du Citoyens did not know he was located on Algonquin Territory
- The National Capital Commission had one of the prime lookout spots over the St Lawrence Watershed in Gatineau Park call Huron Lookout
- William Commanda and I articulated the territorial and relational integrity of the Algonquin Peoples of the Ottawa River Waterhead and more than that, brought the people on the Quebec and Ottawa sides, both on and off reserve together – they were all there at his funeral. But sadly not all understood this critical legacy – as evidenced by the January 2021 land struggles in the National Capital Region

### THE OTTAWA RIVER WATERSHED AND ITS INCREDIBLE GEOLOGICAL HISTORY

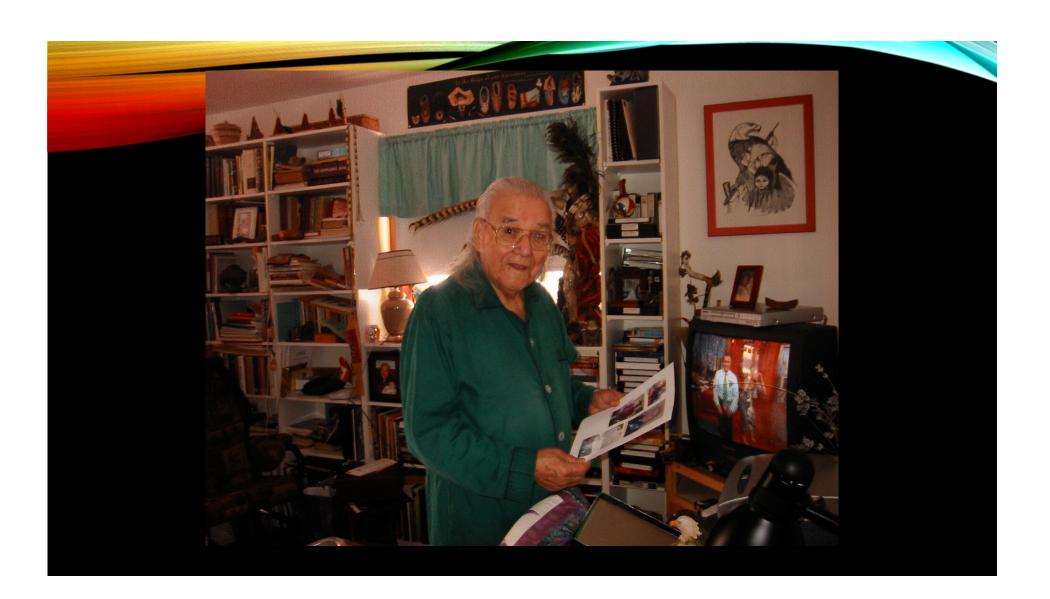
- It is arguably the most important river in Canada
- It traverses the rock evidence of the four critical periods of Earth creation over billions of years
- The second wildest river of North America, the rocks around the Chaudiere and Capital City represent the earliest building block of oxygen, the life creation entity generated in its waters
- Exploitation of its beaver, trees, water power and locatio gave birth to the Canada we know now
- We awakened attention to the river with our 2006 Waterlife Workshop, challenge of expansion of the hydro dam at the Sacred Chaudiere Falls, and engagement with the Ottawa Heritage River Designation work
- Its unbridled exploitation has left us most recently with floods and tornadoes and now COVID

#### **ASINABKA INDIGENOUS CENTRE**

- Extensive information on this Legacy Vision of William Commanda is available on our website <a href="https://www.asinabka.com">www.asinabka.com</a>
- It was sadly appropriated by the corporate sector, viz Zibi/Windmill, and abandoned by "Algonquin" and fragmented by "supporters"
- We continue to animate the Virtual Asinabka
- Now, in part it takes the form of this Digital Global Village that social media, the continuing reach of the William Commanda voice and passion, and Facebook technology enable us to animate
- More DEVASTINGLY, its thwarting has resulted in the further desecration of a singular Sacred Indigenous Site of geo-cosmic and paleolithic importance

#### **GINAWAYDAGANUC AND CAN**

- Ginawaydaganuc and the deep understanding of the interelatedness of everything contrbuted the constant prayer and mantra on William's lips and in his spirit and work – and given all he knew about people and institutions, that required considerable strength to affirm with compassion and "no boxing gloves"
- Circle of All Nations continues to make efforts to build bridges and where there are no gates and gatekeepers, the work is magic and evolutionary in nature – and it takes a tremendous biodiversity of talents and capacities to manifest in new forms yet retain consistency with its foundational principles
- We say like Grandfather that we need to be Good Enough for Two, and need to Come Together with One Heart, One Mind, One Love and One Determination to Create a Circle of All Nations, a Culture of Peace



### FROM KINDERGARTEN DROPOUT TO RESEARHCED PHD

- In 2005 we wrote the book "Learning From a Kindergarten Dropout"
- In 2006 he was presented with an Honorary PhD by University of Ottawa, and in 2011, second one by Universitat de Quebec Outaouise
- Chancellor and Former Governor General Michaelle Jean created the William Commanda Hall at the University of Ottawa in 2014
- Carleton University named the Indigenous Student's Resource Centre "Ojigkwanong" after him in 2014
- I completed our PhD entitled "Ginawaydaganuc and the Circle of All Nations – The Remarkable Environmental Legacy of Elder William Commanda" – structured around the CAN logo
- PS He was also appointed Officer of the Order of Canada, this country's highest honour for those who desire a better country as indeed he did!

### TRAVELS – AND SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS

- William Commanda, Mamiwinini, travelled widely France, Switzerland, Japan, Mexico
- After I met him and took early retirement, we drove all over the Atlantic Seaboard, around the Great Lakes and beyond, several times
- We also went to Germany, South Africa, the Bahamas, New Mexico and Oregan
- We were also constantly in motion between Kitigan Zibi and Kanata in fact, William Commanda decided to move in here in Kanata and "keep house" when I travelled to South Africa – Tennesee Mike will remember that!
- (I had a poster of Daphne Odjig's Grandfather Suite from the early eighties perhaps this takeover of my space was already in the plans!)
- We were very impressed with systemic constellation work of Bert Hellinger and Karl Heinz Raucher William Commanda launched the first Conference with Ceremony

### CANOE A TEACHING TOOL AND METAPHOR FOR THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

- William Commanda is a world renowned canoe maker
- He built a canoe for Queen Margarethe of Denmark at the Roskilde Museum – Two years ago Winnie S. Laursen reconnected us with Jan Skamby
- A canoe display dedicated to the work of William and Mary was opened at the Millennium Launch of the Canoe Museum the legacy of Kirk Wipper
- Valerie Pouyanne created the Good Enough for Two canoe documentary pro bono – Todd Labrador and Maureen Bartholemew were involved
- Paddle for Peace Events at Victoria Island
- We shall been talking about the William Commanda Canoe Journey on May 23 with these folk – JOIN US!

### BOOKS, VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Prolific Communications
- Karen Bisson our lead with our Graphics Design work and www.asinabka.com
- Late Normand Champlain created our first William Commanda book of Birthday Reflections
- We wrote two Learning from A Kindergarten Dropout Books, and one on my Kayaking Summer at his Lake -
- Several folk created documentaries on William Commanda Lucie Ouimet (NFB), Valerie Pouyanne, Jeremy Wright, Patrick Gravel and Jean Lettellier – and CBC and others
- William Commanda remains a vibrant presence on Facebook with FB algorithms reminding all regularly about his his timeless messages
- Since the onslaught of Covid, FB technology has enabled us to animate a CAN Digital Global Village and leave a record of our work for the public

### GATHERINGS, TEACHINGS AND CONCEPTUAL TOOLS

- William Commanda animated his work in a variety of ways we have talked about the Sunbow Five Walk for Mother Earth and Healing, the Gatherings, his outreach to government, environmental organizations and diverse communities, and his Peace events at Chaudiere Victoria Island
- We have developed many conceptual tools to enable a diversity of folk to integrate a complexity of approaches that lead to our Blueprint for the Good Life!
- Our Medicine Wheel Features in the 2021 Global Climate Coaching Event and we shall be presenting it on April 22 Earth Day at a special FB Live!

### INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

- Integrating Indigenous Grassroots NGOs Governments and Academia
- Bridge building to integrate diversity and common purpose
- Finding our rightful and places on the penultimate provider, Mother Earth, with respect, responsibility and reverence
- Embracing our common heritage as cosmic beings
- Ginawaydaganuc It is all inter-related and All is Connected

• <a href="https://www.artforaid.ca/">https://www.artforaid.ca/</a>

• Colleen Gray



1 4 Neithasa Eagles
Neithasa Eagle

#### WILLIAM COMMANDA, INDIGENOUS ELDER, WAMPUM CARRIER, HON PHD, OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF CANADA



THE LEGACY OF ALGONQUIN ELDER L'HÉRITAGE DE L'AÎNÉ ALGONQUIN

Dr. William Commanda, OC

11.11.1913 - 03.08.2011

"We must come together with one heart, one mind, one love, and one determination to create A Circle of All Nations A Culture of Peace."

"Nous devons nous unir avec un seul cœur, une seule âme et une volonté pour créer un cercle de toutes les nations et une culture de paix."



www.circleofallnations.ca www.asinabka.com



## KINDERGARTEN DROPOUT, PEACE (LMT), MOTHER EARTH (VI), HON PHD CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS: CAN BRIDGE TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES!



### WILLIAM COMMANDA, CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS (CAN) AND SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS

#### **CORE CAN THEMES**

- **IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**
- Canoe/Kayak Journeys
- Sustainable Relations
- Laws of Nature and Human Animals
- Nature/Tectonic Abrasion/Evolution/Peace
- Circle of All Nations Bridge Building
- Kindergarten Dropout PhD and OC
- Spiritual Trajectory to Knowledge
- 2020 Digital Mapping Retrospective and Reflection
- GINAWAYDAGANUC UBUNTU All is Related
- CAN Sustainable Relations Goals for a Culture of Peace

- ANIMATIVE ACTIONS
- 1945 Activism and Politics as in Civil Rights!
- 1967 Canada 100; Eganville Gathering
- 1969 Gathering: Kitigan Zibi/Bitobi Lake
- National to Global 1987, 1991, 1993 ME and CC
- Agenda 21: Sustainable Development \*1
- Sunbow Five Walk 1995 /96
- 1996 RCAP Report Who will Drink the Water?\*
- 1996 .... CAN Gatherings and Non-stop Outreach
- 2000 GlobalEcoPeace Posters and Gathering
- 2006 Waterlife Workshop; Sustainable Relations\*2
- 2003 Asinabka Vision for Sacred Chaudiere Site
- 2012 ... GWC and CAN in ACADEMIA Bridge Building and Global Outreach

#### WHO IS WILLIAM COMMANDA?

- Carrier of sacred Wampum heritage
- Renowned birch bark canoe maker and craftsman
- Political Algonquin leader, elder, chief, chief the North American Indigenous Nations Government
- Founder of the *Circle of All Nations*, a global eco-peace-community dedicated to advancing environmental stewardship and racial harmony
- Officer of the Order of Canada and recipient of two honorary doctorate degrees
- University of Ottawa Chancellor Michaelle Jean (GG) created Commanda Hall in recognition of his relevance to academic knowledge in 2014
- Canadian History Hall: Commanda panel and message



### NEW WORK, NEW COLLEAGUES AND SPECIAL NEW CAN COLLABORATION!







#### Reproductive Justice

4'3

EMALINE SAYLOR,
L.L.B. TRANSNATIONAL LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS

#### Farhan Wilayat

Philanthropiist and Activist

BUILDING WATER PUMPS FOR VILLAGERS IN THE DESERT AREA AND DOING MUCH MORE!

#### Dr. Graciela Yanovsky

Ongoing Collaboration with Circle of All Nations on UNESCO - ECOSOC Priorities

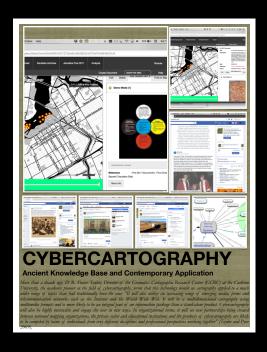
ENVIRONMENT, PEACE and INDIGENOUS PRIORITIES with NGO/UN LIAISON

#### **Emaline Saylor**

Reproductive Justice Through an Environmental Lens

AND IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIGENOUS AND MARGINALIZED - AND BEYOND!

### CYBERCARTOGRAPHY, CYBERNETIC GUIDANCE, FB LIVE: ENCORE VIVANT WILLIAM COMMANDA!

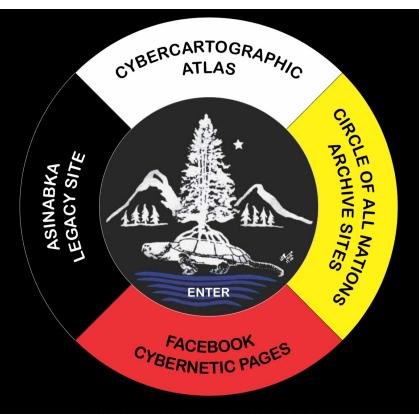






712 1,760
pole Reached Engagements Boost Post

Circle of Life: Donald Marshall Junior



### A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS GLOBAL ECO PEACE COMMUNITY

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#### CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS CONTACT DETAILS

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Find us on Facebook: Romola Vasantha Thumbadoo, Circle of All Nations, William Commanda, William Commanda Legacy Asinabka, Romola's Nature CAN TEACH

Thumbadoo, R.V. (2018). Ginawaydaganuc and the Circle of All Nations: The Remarkable Environmental Legacy of Elder William Commanda PhD Thesis. Ottawa. Carleton University. <a href="https://curve.carleton.ca/aa4e3cbb-5b83-464d-8286-a901fcd77b06">https://curve.carleton.ca/aa4e3cbb-5b83-464d-8286-a901fcd77b06</a>