

2023 Circle of All Nations November 11 Report on Recent Work in Support of the Legacy of Grandfather William Commanda

We apologize that we have not presented our usual annual reports on the work of the *Circle of All Nations* over the past few years. This is a catch up report on a few highlights of the past few years!

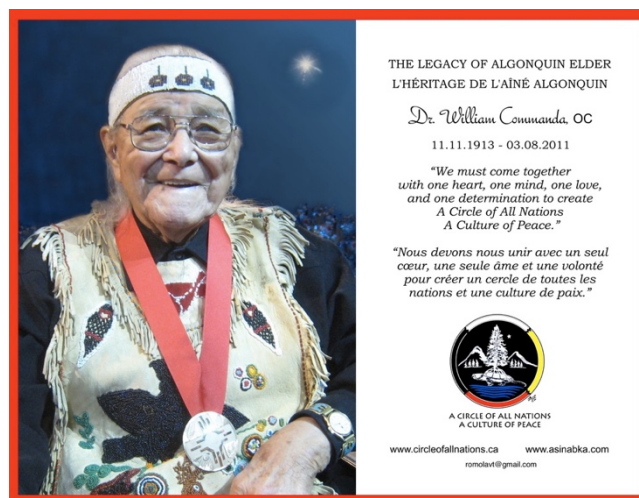
But most of you will know that we continue to advance the work and legacy of Grandfather William Commanda both nationally and internationally – non stop.

Since the Covid Pandemic, much of this work is animated in our several pages on Facebook – you will recall that Grandfather, ever our *cyber dot.com* elder, engaged with this online platform at its inception in 2009!

But now, this is complemented by our new, comprehensive website,

<https://circleofallnations.ca>

This November 2023 Report, prepared to share on the occasion of Elder William Commanda's 110th birth date, 11 November, presents a mini outline of some of our key activities, accomplishments, with links that lead to more detailed discussion. A full photo journal report will be made available on our website at year end.



1. Our comprehensive archival *Circle of All Nations* website, accessible via our landing page at <https://circleofallnations.ca>, with the new site also accessible at <https://circleofallnations.ca/new/> is our major product of the past few years. The Landing Page leads to our central new site, to our three archival sites, our several Facebook pages and other online social media sites, and our “under development” Cybercartographic atlas; it is our evolving on-line capturing the knowledge, thinking, work and legacy of Elder Commanda in multiple formats, and in image and text, to be accessible to a diversity of interested parties – Indigenous, grassroots, environmentalists, social activists, peace builders, and academics, with photos and graphics to bridge beyond language and cultural boundaries and barriers. The Landing Page was created by a former Carleton University student of Chinese roots – Qingke April Yu: and she notes that she still returns to the images to connect with Indigenous and Circle of All Nations thinking, since reading the extensive English text is sometimes challenging. The website at large has been created by another former Carleton University student, who continues to support its development – Jonathan-Wandrille Bwirukiro, originally from Burundi, whose family had to seek asylum and then refugee status in Canada, has spent the last several years creating the website, then making adaptations for access on tablets and phone, and with help from another former student, Emaline Saylor, creating a unique feature of our website – a table of contents! Many of you will know what a long, complex and diversified life Elder Commanda lived and executed, alone, and including with countless others, and we are trying our best to share this interrelated complexity as he wished with any and all interested parties. This was his *Ginawaydaganuc* style, wherein everything is interrelated!

Our website includes learning modules in the context of *micro learning* and *macro learning*. Beyond this, another Carleton student, Zaineh Harahsha, created a Reflections Workbook on our book, *Learning from a Kindergarten Dropout*; these learning aids, together with an additional complimentary resource document, will be included in a new section in our website.

2. Since the onslaught of the Covid Pandemic, we have hosted several recorded Facebook Live Video events and all are accessible on Facebook and our evolving *Circle of All Nations* Utube channel - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdMJRExRTpr4zhNWH_YBedQ. In fact, before Zoom became the modus operandi of our times, *Circle of All Nations* hosted the first all-day free and globally accessible on line gathering – in May 2020 – the 20th anniversary of our International Millennium Gathering at Nepean Point, Ottawa, Canada. Recent, almost non-stop travel slowed us down but we intend to continue with periodic Facebook live video events.
3. In 2021, we joined Global Climate Action Coaching Webinar, to present a workshop on the *Circle of All Nations* Medicine Wheel – here you can access the full event <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlj5Si3GGe4&list=PL2MfFD9VMJOtLg9cEgujuEbk6yz9iQY3N&index=2>

In this link, you will find a shorter discussion of our *Circle of All Nations* Medicine Wheel approach to planning and MINI Medicine Wheel Presentation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5B_FqqtV1s&list=PL2MfFD9VMJOsLddmXoqdLPs6SPHrBcmCc&index=7

4. In 2022, we created a commemorative William Commanda calendar – it presents a timeless overview of critical elements in his storyline – you can access a free download here - <https://delivery.shopifyapps.com/-/75e6a287f693c6d9/a29212ff12ed578a>
It is also featured in the new Photoatlas Research work undertaken with Professor Alexander Wolodotshenko <https://circleofallnations.ca/new/gallery/photoatlas-series/>
5. We presented William Commanda to the Geospatial World, in this trade magazine – and our article was reposted for Indigenous Day. Note that in May 2022, we anticipated the historical *Apology to Indigenous Peoples* that came a few months later – after the five hundred years of obscurity that William Commanda (and colleagues like the late Jules Sioui) had challenged through the North American Indian Nations Government, from the mid nineteen forties – the time of the creation of the United Nations; indeed, they were the first civil rights activists of North America. <https://www.geospatialworld.net/prime/indigenous-mapping-insights-and-cybercartography/?fbclid=IwAR3KwHqCRdwp6lt7TZurjLYtHHQWfZ9gShNKAR9trNzKFWnQA9yhMypLnxw>
6. We have developed two innovative Children’s Mapping projects in South Africa and in Winnipeg, linked with the International Cartographic Association and the Barbara Petchenik Children’s Map Competition, which was initiated by Professor Fraser Taylor, Director of the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, at Carleton University, 30 years ago. In Winnipeg, together with our *Circle of All Nations* Indigenous justice friend of 30 years, Clayton Sandy, Hon, PhD, we are engaged in a Newcomer Youth Heritage Mapping project with Immigrant Partnership Winnipeg. We are exploring new methodologies with mapping, mapstorytelling and therapeutic art creation contributing to school based practice in child and youth care work with the National Association of Child Care Workers (<https://naccw.org.za>) in South Africa – yes, Grandfather launched the work with NACCW in 2000, at the *Circle of All Nations* International Millennium Peace Gathering at Nepean Point; and he blessed the first Isibindi workshop in South Africa, in 2001. This latter activity happened at the time of 9/11 and, when interviewed by the Citizen, upon our delayed return to Canada, he said, “Make Peace, Not War”. This year, we made five presentations on our mapping work, including one on Grandfather’s *Cybernetic Canoe Mapping Strategy* to educate and guide diverse peoples towards respect for Mother Earth and Peacebuilding. Steering tiny canoes through rain gullies as a toddler, learning the art of canoe making from Uncle Andre Cayer by the time he was eight, and then using it as a teaching methodology as an adult, his canoe heritage was revitalized in 2006 in the documentary, *Good Enough for Two*, by Valerie Pouyanne, and with MicMaq canoe maker Todd Labrador in 2006, used as a methodological tool in the PhD thesis (Thumbadoo, R.V. (2018). *Ginawaydaganuc and the Circle of All Nations: The Remarkable Environmental Legacy of Elder William Commanda* <https://curve.carleton.ca/aa4e3cbb-5b83-464d-8286-a901fcd77b06>; re-presented as *The “Cybernetic” Canoe Journey Continues*, with Ron

KitchiMakwa and Winnie SKtree Laursen SkTree during the September 22, 2023 Live Facebook Video event (<https://www.facebook.com/circleofallnations/videos/230954883284000>) - and indeed, look around in Ottawa today, and you will see that it does! We are most grateful for the ongoing support of Professor Fraser Taylor with our academic work!

7. Finally, we have made great efforts to contribute to an ongoing awareness and understanding of the William Commanda's knowledge and thinking in the academic world, further to the completion of the thesis, in postdoctoral research and in articles and conference presentations that acknowledge his name directly. A list of these and access details are included in our website, and are present in journals, book chapters and conference proceedings.
8. We are very thrilled to report that the most recent of these was published as a chapter entitled *Tracking climate action discourse in Indigenous Elder William Commanda's work for a responsible and respectful relationship with Mother Earth* in the book *Indigenizing Knowledge for Climate Action*, during the October 2023 Indigenous Water Summit organized by Diana Mastracci Sanchez and Space4Innovation. You can access the book and our chapter at the following links:

<https://pressbooks.pub/indigenizingclimateaction/>

<https://pressbooks.pub/indigenizingclimateaction/chapter/tracking-climate-action-discourse-in-indigenous-elder-william-commandas-work-for-a-responsible-and-respectful-relationship-with-mother-earth/>

We are thrilled to report this because the chapter discusses the work of *Circle of All Nations* colleagues who acknowledge the Grandfather influence and ongoing presence in their work:

- Jean Letellier contributed to my references in our thesis – I included academic and grassroots references
- Stephen McFadden documented his voice from the 80s and 90s, including the epic Sunbow Five Walk across North America and now notes his influence on Deep Agroecology
- Julia Blagny took seeds from his home to Europe and South America, asserting the life blood of water in her documentary of the water challenges in Bolivia
- Patrick Gravel created a documentary and organized a walk for the protection of the forests in Quebec, Canada
- Beulah Thumbadoo and Associates joined challenge against test drilling in the Wild Coast, South Africa
- Jayd Soliar, Trichy Vila, created a still relevant music video launched with COP 17 just after William Commanda's death in 2011

Finally, then, on this Remembrance Day anniversary of the birth of the Morning Star, *Ojigkwanong*, who was born on the eve of the First World War, believed by many to be presenting a ray of light into an ever-darkening world, *Circle of All Nations* again reiterates his words, “Make Peace, Not War” and we *Map his Prayer* to inspire us into a challenging and unprecedented future.

With love and respect

Circle of All Nations Culture of Peace

The Work and Legacy of Grandfather William Commanda

by Romola V. Thumbadoo

Romola@circleofallnations.ca

