

CONFLUENCE - AKIKPAUTIK/CHAUDIÈRE FALLS A NATURAL MEDICINE WHEEL IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY

***Awakened and Animated by William Commanda,
Algonquin of the Ottawa River Watershed,
Carrier of the Sacred Wampum Belt Heritage***

A Presentation at “Confluence 2025” – a joint 75th annual meeting of the
Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG), and 50th meeting of the
Canadian Cartographic Association (CCA)

Romola V. Thumbadoo PhD, Post Doctoral Researcher
Circle of All Nations, Legacy Work of William Commanda, OC, Hon PhD

MINI PERSONAL BACKGROUND

- From 1987 to 1997, I worked extensively in (then) Aboriginal Corrections, Policing and **Justice** across the country
- I became deeply aware of the **extensive overt and systemic oppression** and abuse of the First Peoples of Canada – and of those in all colonized places across the world. Here, this was documented in justice inquiries in every province and territory. This awakened me to my own South African heritage of racism and apartheid
- I met **William Commanda, then 84 years old, in 1997**, in the context of my Indigenous Justice work
- When I understood the scope of his work and vision, I took **early retirement** from the federal government and supported his work pro bono till his death in 2011
- In 2012, I **returned to academia**, and completed my doctoral and postdoctoral research on his **Circle of All Nations work and environmental legacy** under the supervision of Late Professor Fraser Taylor
 - He himself had already met Elder Commanda

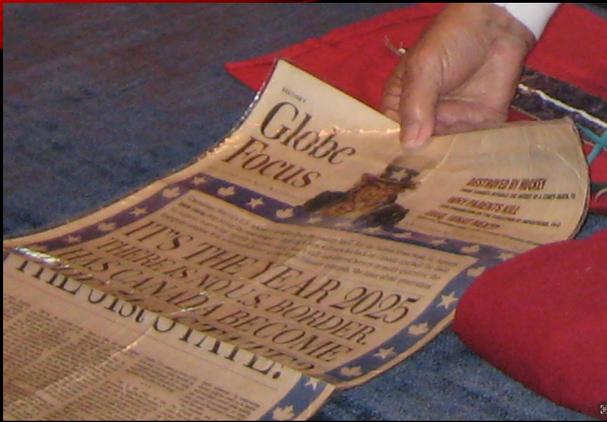
I am blessed to have driven **William Commanda** extensively across the Ottawa River Watershed and I have a passionate interest in its geological history

ELDER, CHIEF AND SUPREME CHIEF POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL LEADER AND COUNTER- MAPPER

- Acclaimed chief of the River Desert Band, the first reserve in Canada, negotiated by his great grandfather Pakinawatik, for over 19 years, and Supreme Chief of the North American Indian Nations Government, the political organization of the First Peoples of North America, that preceded the civil rights movement – **he engaged in counter mapping from the mid forties**, preceding Routledge's documentation of the same, at this time fighting for the rightful place of his peoples to their lands
- 30 years ago, he again affirmed the **unified integrity of his homeland of Turtle Island**, North America, when he served as spiritual guide for the **Sunbow Five Walk** from First Encounter Beach in Mass to Santa Barbara, California, site of the notorious residential facility – this was a peace building mission inclusive of assertion of Indigenous presence and environmental stewardship (documented in an online book, *The Odessey of the Seven Fires* by his colleague Steven McFadden – yes, this from 1995!)
- He was acutely aware of the **economic implications** of colonization and colonialism, and noted with Mulroneys's free trade agreement of 1987 what would become Trump's war cry to Canada – **"We are going to become the 51st State of the United States"** *Profiles in Wisdom* (1991) McFadden

DISCOURSE: POLITICAL ACTIVISM, SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP, ENVIRONMENT

Theoretical Frameworks



Mamiwinini + Complex Language Motion, Cognitive Mapping, Oral Storytelling mnemonics
Prophecy – Detecting Early Warning Signals – *Enviro Scanning*
 Emergent from *Law of Nature* Web of Knowledge
Ginawaydaganuc Interconnection Life Project – Indigenous identity, values, presence
Grounded Theory - a substantive theory of practice is implicit in good practice (Anglin, 2002)
Cybernetic Steering and guiding, as per Canoe Motif

The North American Indian Nation
GOVERNMENT 11 NOV 1945

This identification card indicates that

Mrs. William Commens
 is a member of the Maniwaki band, tribe, Algonquin
 Date and year of birth 11 November in 1916, 1918
 The County which he reside Getineau district
 The Province of Quebec The County of Canada
 made by Jules Sioui, sec. box 4,

JULES SIOUI
 SEC.
 Box 4 - Loretteville
 Quebec, P.Q., Canada

File No. 42

INDIGENOUS MAPPING: TURTLE ISLAND GREAT MYSTERY'S CREATION

ADAPTED FROM CAN 2004 PRESENTATIONS; NOW IN 2022 GEOSPATIAL WORLD ARTICLE <https://www.geospacialworld.net/prime/indigenous-mapping-insights-and-cybercartography/>



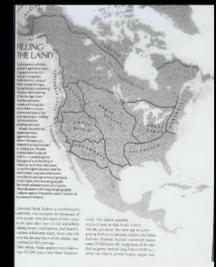
Yoshi Turtle
 Purposeful movement
 on land and water
Cybernetics



Indigenous Artist
 Arnold Jacob's
 interpretation of
 Turtle Island



Mamiwinini/travelling
 across Turtle Island
 84 Nations Mapping in
 Language

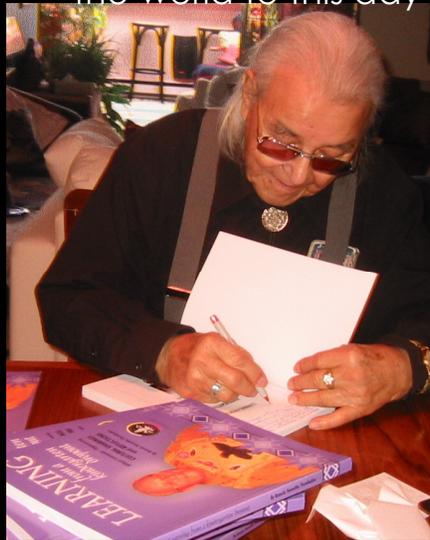


North America
 as we call it now

WILLIAM COMMANDA BEGAN HIS WORK AT AKIKPAUTIK IN THE 1970S WITH NCC

Learning from a Kindergarten Dropout

Widely travelled internationally known canoe builder and craftsman, influential dot.com and online elder, statesman emeritus: humble wise, holy man beloved to many across the world to this day



INFLUENTIAL GROUNDBREAKER with an unprecedented series of high profile honours in Akikpautik/NCC

- Key to the City of Ottawa 2026
- Hon PhD Uni Ottawa 2006
- Officer of the Order of Canada 2008
- National Aboriginal Achievement Award 2010
- Doc Causa Honorific UQO 2011
- Master Canoe Builder

and many more

INFLUENCE – A Few Highlights

Official Welcomes; Land Affirmation Launch - Human Rights Tribute Launch - Land Mines Treaty Launch - Species At Risk American Eel on Endangered List Danford Lake Megadump Inquiry Citizen's Inquiry re: Uranium Test Drilling Paddle for Peace events at Akikpautik Sustainable Relations Workshops 2006 WaterLife Workshop for Ottawa R The Awakening Gathering in Perth Vision for the Asinabka - International Peace Building Centre Peace tree planting at City of Ottawa and present location of Canadian Geographical Society Welcomed global leaders to his country Honorary Eler for the Ottawa Heritage River Designation

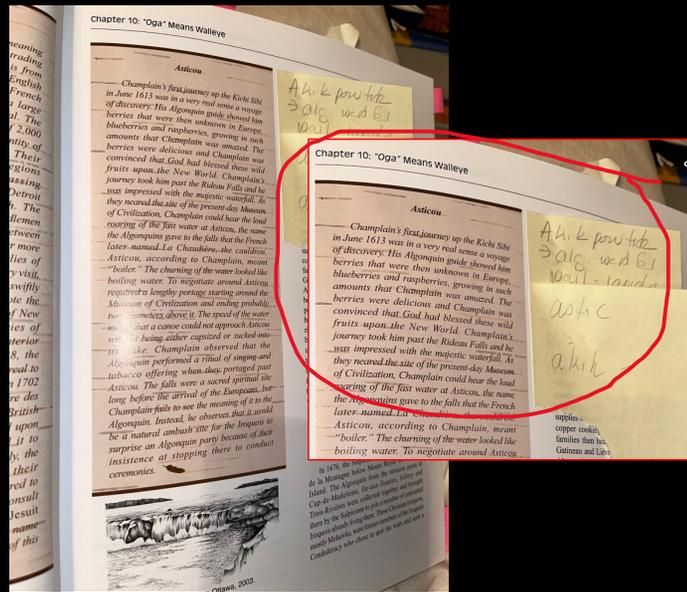
From Lake Capimichigama, the lake that goes sideways (because of the wind), the river flows west, then south, then west then east, a dervish counter spin; as it flows west to east it is joined by the Gatineau/Tenagatin (the river that climbs upwards) and the Rideau, with the "straight down curtain waterfalls) and creates a natural medicine wheel – the Circle of All Nations Medicine Wheel animates the William Commanda work

OTTAWA RIVER WATERSHED

Special Ancient Geological History of Earth

1. Earth's Creation 4.5 Billion Years Lithosphere: Crust reveals 4 time periods Archeozoic, Proterozoic, Plaeozoic, and Cenozoic
2. Proterozoic - 2nd period - 3,800,000,000 – 620,000,000 *Algonkian* (in a book in the W Commanda Library.
3. Holds earliest records of precursors to an oxygenated atmosphere
4. Complex life - Invertebrates, spores, marine algae in rock
5. Ottawa River: Only Canadian River to cross all 4 time periods
6. 100s of Millions of Years Ago Americas: 2 Continental Islands
7. Here: Laurentian Shield – older than Alps/Rockies/Himalayas
8. Source of Ottawa within oldest of 2 rock sites in NA - igneous and metamorphic

NOTE the discussion in my notes on the name in "Since Time Immemorial: Our Story – The story of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg" – We correct Asticou to the correct AKIKPAUTIK where I write it is the Algonquin word for PAIL, RAPIDS – as in circular, boiling cauldron



TWO Special Rock Features of the Ottawa River Watershed - and Algonquin Heritage

The Gowganda Strata Formation bordering Lake Temiskaming, is part of an episode of continental glaciation (2.2 billion years ago) from before the last Ice Age, its geological history revealed by the Nipissing Diabase igneous rock. This was known to the Algonquins in its topographical presentation on the west shore of Lake Temiscaming as **Spirit Rock**

The Grenville formation, comprised of metamorphic and intrusive rock, is presented most graphically in **Oiseau Rock**. It is acknowledged as a site revered by the Algonquins, and also marked by sacred paintings, at the metamorphosed limestone (marble) rocks around Allumette, Calumet and Rocher Fendu. It is a place of historical significance acknowledged in the 1613 Champlain encounter with Algonquin chief Tessauot. It was also sought as reserved sanctuary by William Commanda's own great grandfather, Pakinawatik, in his efforts to safeguard ancestral rights in the Ottawa River Watershed in the mid 1800s.





The Ottawa flows from west to east and is joined by the Gatineau and Rideau – this natural Medicine Wheel image was created by historian Lindsay Lambert

the Ottawa River disappeared into two of these underwater channels at the area of the Chaudieres, symbolic of the connection with the womb of Mother Earth, a referent of great relevance to many Indigenous peoples.

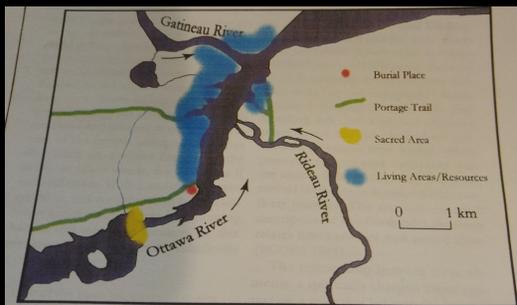
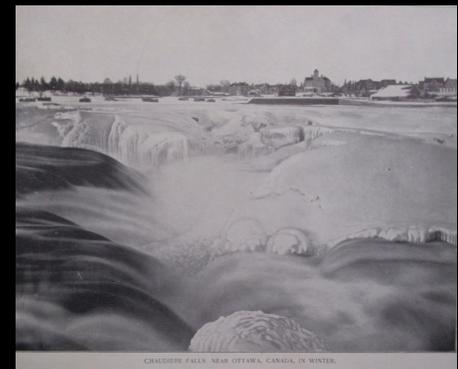
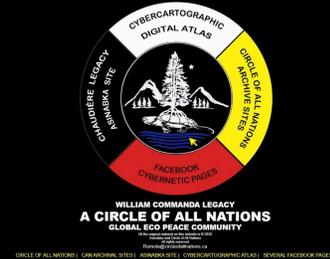


FIGURE 8. Elements of the cultural landscape of Canada's National Capital Region.

Journal Canadien d'Archéologie 39 (2015)



Evan Pritchard, researcher and writer (eg. Native New Yorkers) did some research for WC re: ancient meeting places across NA – where three rivers meet, and rapids pound, the people will gather. Our research suggests Akikpautik is one such place, older than Mayan Sun Temple, Giza, and Ankara Wat



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"We must come together with one heart, one mind, one love and one determination."
~William Commanda "OJIKWANGONG"



2008 - Prime Minister Paul Martin reads William Commanda's Proposition for equitable sharing of the resources of the country, consistent with the Three Free Sharing Wampum Belt



He developed a **Vision for Reconciliation** with Mother Earth, amongst Indigenous Peoples, and with all others

In 2003, he secured support from all the Algonquin Nations on both sides of the Ottawa River for an Indigenous Centre at Akikpautik



A Prayer for Healing – MMIW, Land, Youth, and Donald Marshal Junior

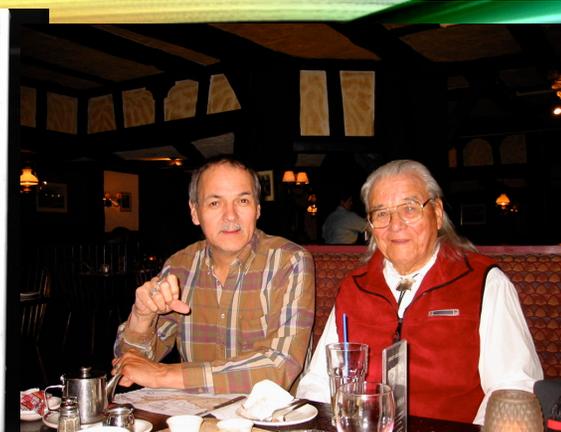


Anne Pennington Mayer, historian and reminder of the Honour of the Crown and the Pearls of the Sea and International Law 1532





Photo data evidence for further research into the WC Discourse



The Indigenous in the Centre
Three Figure Wampum Belt



PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

October 29, 2003

Dear Elder Commanda:

Thank you for your letter of August 14, 2004, regarding the proposed Victoria Island Project. I apologize for the delay in replying.

The establishment of an Indigenous Centre on Victoria Island would certainly represent further tangible proof of Canadians' commitment to human rights, tolerance and multiculturalism. The Government of Canada regards diversity as a fundamental and cherished characteristic of our country; and I can assure you that the Government remains committed to these two fundamental Canadian values. This commitment was reinforced in the *Speech from the Throne* on September 30, 2002, which stated that "Canada has a unique model of citizenship, based simultaneously on diversity and mutual responsibility".

Furthermore, as I have said in the past, Aboriginals have a special role to play because of the nature of our country. Canada has welcomed immigrants from everywhere and is being steadily enriched by Aboriginal peoples: the First Nations, the Inuit and the Métis. We have proven that pluralism works, and we will continue to promote the values of democracy, peace and freedom, human rights and the rule of law. These values ensure that the richness of the respective cultures will benefit all Canadians.

Thank you again for taking the time to write on this important issue. I am forwarding a copy of our exchange of correspondence to the Honourable Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, for her consideration.

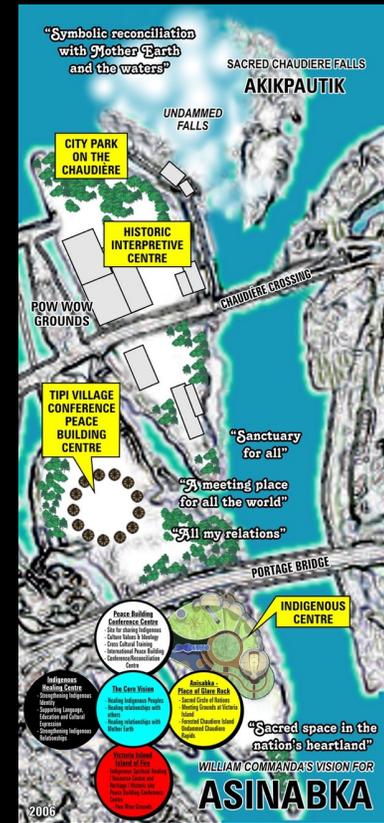
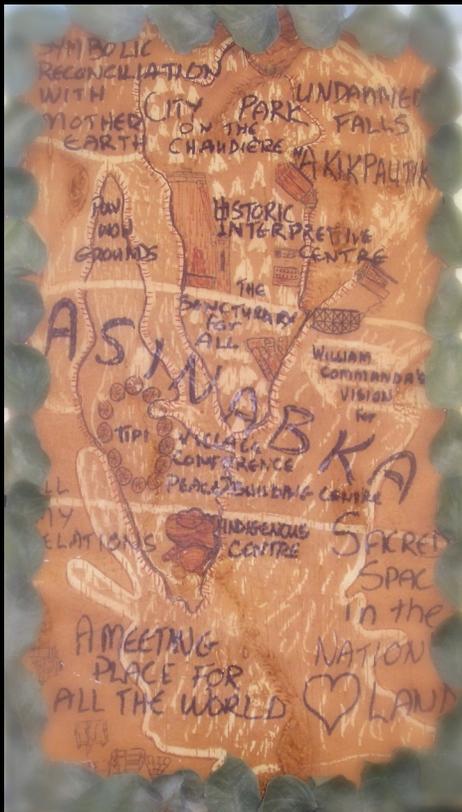
Yours sincerely,

Mr. William Commanda
Algonquin Elder
Circle of All Nations
c/o 506 Stratias Court
Kanata, Ontario
K2L 3K7

2003- PM Chretien supports Vision for Indigenous Center at Akikpauitik



In 2000, most citizens of Ottawa did not know about the spectacular circular rapids in the heart of the capital city; WC and the floods of 2017 changed this; they did not know this was Algonquin territory. William Commanda brought the attention back to this ancient gathering place, now made more visible by this joint CAG/CCA geography conference as **Akikpautik – indeed a Confluence for New Research and Cartography**



As the Indigenous presence diminished at the central meeting place in the heart of the country, the area lost its pristine character, and became a heavily contaminated **industrial wasteland**

William Commanda worked actively to **reclaim the Sacred Chaudiere Site**, linked to his direct ancestors, and to present a vision for an international healing and peace building centre.

It was initially endorsed by the federal government and the City of Ottawa, but shifting politics and the positions of Algonquins communities, and developer interests led to its **demise**.



8,000 years ago,,
 this was a place of
 meeting and
 cultural exchange
 for Indigenous
 Peoples across
 North America,
 evidenced in
 copper and
 turquoise artifacts



.....TODAY.....

400 years ago,
 Samuel de
 Champlain
 witnessed the
 ancestors of the
 Algonquin Nation
 conducting
 tobacco
 ceremonies here,
 identifying the
 area as a special
 sacred site



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;
 Adam and the Sleeping Giant commemorating Earth creation in rock;
 Air, wind, movement animating water life emergent from the oxygen rocks of the Kichissippi Ottawa River;
 Birch, wolf, seal and turtle honoring 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 Mishran Maragathasan for Circle of All Nations
 © Remstra@carleton.ca



The William
 Commanda
 Prayer for Water,
 Sacred Sites, and
 the Laws of
 Nature,
 continues in this
 graphic design
 creation by a
 Carleton
 University
 Student
 Encore Vivant!

Discursive Reach of William Commanda

Today, May 21, but 2000, William Commanda hosted the first peace event in Ottawa – his International Millennium Peace Gathering at Nepean Point, (where Champlain's astrobale was mounted upside down). In June 1995, he commenced the Sunbow Five Walk across North America

The ongoing research into his work and legacy continues, consistent with the Laws of Nature **Living Systems** – as modeled by the oxygen stone concretions of the Ottawa River of the ancient Glacial Lakes

Systemic Change – in climate change and human relations

Transdisciplinary Research – inclusive of eco, bio human and temporal diversity

Cognitive story mapping – from memory boxes to aspirational vision boarding in a world in turmoil

Cybernetic steering from dot com to Facebook to AI Economic diplomacy vs Law of Nature **diplomacy**

Querying identity, the interrelational and

Begotiating incommensurabilities in a world on fire

Was *Akikpautik* the Trickster ensuring the awakening of the geo-political presence of Indigenous in the Canadian psyche?

Chief Commanda will no doubt keep Bridge Buliding at Akikpautik and Beyond!



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."*

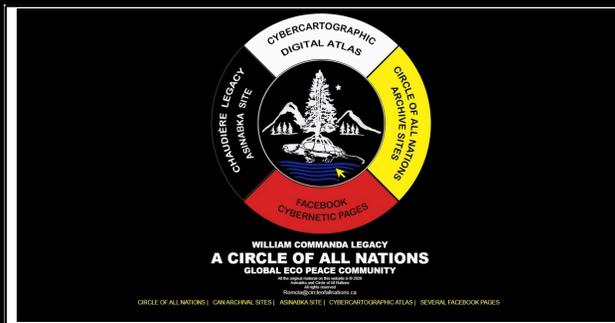
*"Nous devons nous unir avec un seul
cœur, une seule âme et une volonté
pour créer un cercle de toutes les
nations et une culture de paix."*



A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS
A CULTURE OF PEACE

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