

Romola V. Thumbadoo
Selected Publications

From Conflictual to Confluence and Children's Cognitive Story Mapping	2
ICC2025 Experiences and Reflections	5
The Late Dr. D. R. Fraser Taylor	8
Recent Children's Mapping Activities from Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, Carleton University	10

From Conflictual to Confluence and Children's Cognitive Story Mapping Cartouche, Issue 102, pp. 52-53

In May 2025, CCA and CAG hosted their joint conference *Confluence* at Carleton University. The location was showcased as a zone of *Confluence*, referencing the meeting place of three rivers, the Ottawa, Gatineau and Rideau. These rivers converge in the heart of Canada's capital, within the National Capital Region, at the *Akikpautik / Chaudiere Falls*, which was described as *a natural wonder and sacred meeting place of Indigenous Peoples*. The session CS157 Indigenous Knowledges and Knowledge Systems gave me the opportunity to reflect briefly on my entry into the study of Geography at Carleton University in 2012. It was indeed challenging for me, a newcomer, to enter this domain; and, fresh from 15 years of a singular experiential introduction to Ottawa/Kichissippi River Watershed, together with an indoctrination into a particular lens of the *Laws of Nature*, via countless road trips, perspectives on history and environmental activism, with its foremost Indigenous Elder, William Commanda. Elder Commanda was a cartographer of note in his lived experience, knowledge and extensive travels. Sharing his knowledge and thinking in my thesis entitled, "Ginawaydaganuc and the Circle of All Nations, the Remarkable Environmental Legacy of Elder William Commanda", was challenging in a venue grounded in western science that was only just becoming acquainted with Indigenous thinking, including its earth-based spiritual dimension.

The description of the Confluence theme in the conference invitation obliged me to reflect on the Commanda legacy and research again: "By embracing confluence, geographers and cartographers can foster new connections, collaborations, and insights that illuminate complex issues. Cartographic representations of space similarly reflect the confluence of cultural, historical, philosophical, and economic understandings, which have been influenced by past and contemporary technologies, and demonstrate how maps shape and are shaped by our understandings of place, identity, and power. In celebrating this theme, we remember that embracing confluence is about both bringing different perspectives together and creating new possibilities for understanding and addressing complex geographical issues. By sharing knowledge in the spirit of confluence, we can deepen our understanding of geography and cartography and their relevance to contemporary opportunities and challenges".

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 Elder for the Ottawa Heritage River Designation

I believe William Commanda contributed to this understanding. Perhaps the fact that the *Confluence* conference spins on the word *Akikpautik* affirms this to some degree. Perhaps the affirmation of my presentation by Adjunct Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University, Kwaku Kusi-Appiah, also gives some credence to this; he had been working for the then Mayor Bob Chairelli during the early 2000s and was personally acquainted with William Commanda's outreach and work.

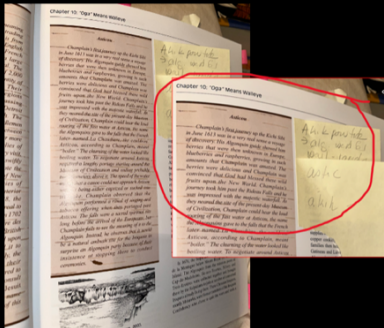
OTTAWA RIVER WATERSHED

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

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/Tenagaitin (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



It was William Commanda himself who had stated that the Algonquin word for the sacred falls was *Akikpautik*; moving beyond *place naming*, it was his tireless work there that brought an obscured brownfield into public consciousness around the turn of the century, with his vision for peacebuilding and environmental stewardship. My presentation entitled “From Conflictual to Confluence” examined his discursive reach 13 years after his death, and its relevance to the objectives of this conference, and can be accessed at <https://circleofallnations.ca/new/akikpautik-from-conflictual-views-to-confluence/>

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

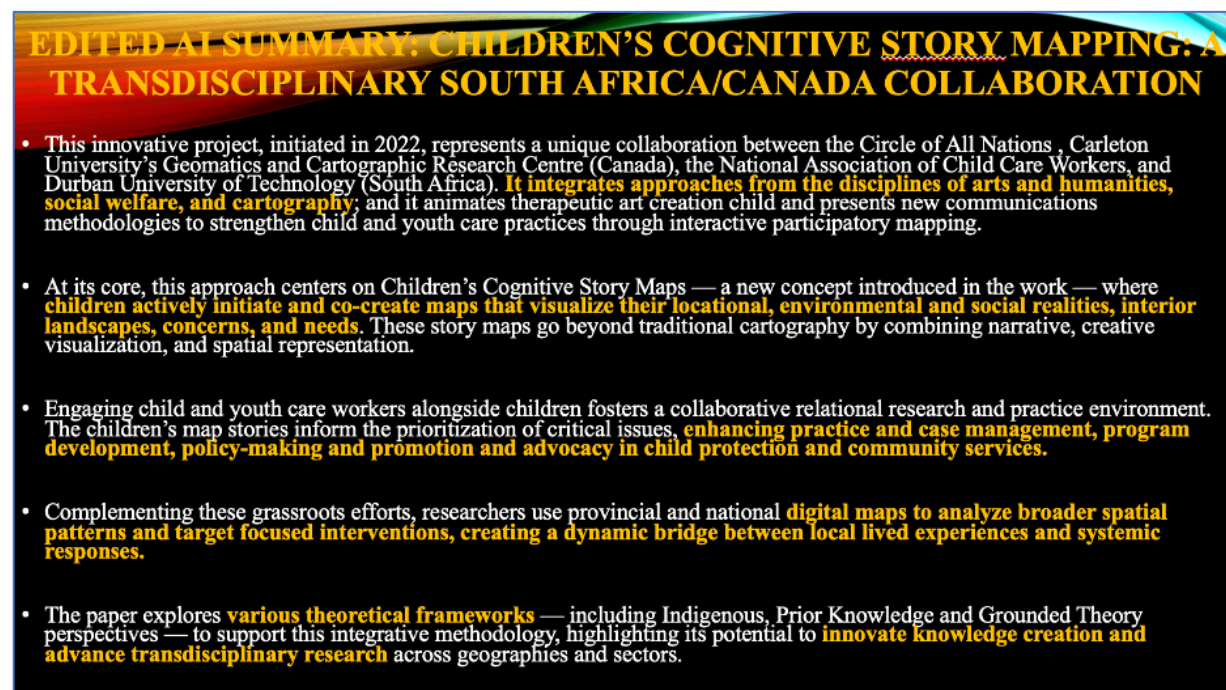
I also did a presentation on the art creation components of the Children's Cognitive Story Mapping initiative referenced above for the CCA's special session on art and cartography. The transdisciplinary collaboration initiated in 2022 by *Circle of All Nations*, Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, Carleton University, (in Canada), National Association of Child Care Workers and Durban University of Technology (in South Africa) integrates approaches from arts and humanities, social welfare and cartography in art story map creation with children. Children initiate the map creation activity with child care workers, and through memory/mind map visualization, engage in geo-narrative storytelling and story map production that surface unexpressed thoughts and positions therapeutic art creation in life-space work. Memory box activities that supported grieving during the HIVAIDs crisis are reconstituted as personal repositories of "safe space" aspirations articulated in art maps.

Preliminary analysis of the work demonstrates the transmutative (change at essence level) and transformational (change at structural level) potential of this work. Comparable to a topographic map that is a model of a geographical, geometric or geospatial landscape and abstraction of external space, so is the cognitive map a representation or abstraction of personal, interior landscapes, marked by dominant and recessive issues, connections, parameters, boundaries and borders. Mapping and storytelling are clearly the central and critical tools of communication and digital technology, and telecommunications make them important Cybercartographic and cybernetic transdisciplinary cartographic modalities of the *age of information* and global connection. Infographics, photoatlases (graphics/textual map collections), dynamic slideshows and cartoon art were examined through the lens of semiotic cartography and digitalization. Additional information about this project follows in my "ICC2025 Experiences and Reflections" later in this issue.

ICC2025 Experiences and Reflections Cartouche, Issue 102, pp. 75-76

I attended ICA's 33rd international conference, ICC2025, in Vancouver, and had the opportunity to participate in the ICA's three-day Participatory Mapping Working Group preconference workshop convened at the University of British Columbia on August 14 to 16, 2025 with financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and as endorsed by Professor Fraser Taylor. The event brought together over 30 scholars, practitioners, and community representatives to exchange knowledge, foster collaborations, and strengthen the foundations of participatory mapping with ICA. The three-day program included keynote presentations, thematic discussions, networking sessions, and field-based learning, with a strong emphasis on building relationships across disciplines and communities. Additional information is available here: [ICA webpage](#).

Professor Fraser Taylor's ongoing contributions to the Barbara Petchenik Children's Mapping Competition, which he initiated in 1993, and drew attention to at ICC23, were also shared in two presentations at the preconference workshop on Inclusive Cartography, as part of our work with the ICA's Commission on Cartography and Children, as well as in ICC25's technical sessions program. Here, presentations focussed on different aspects of the evolving Children's Mapping work in South Africa.



EDITED AT SUMMARY: CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE STORY MAPPING: A TRANSDISCIPLINARY SOUTH AFRICA/CANADA COLLABORATION

- This innovative project, initiated in 2022, represents a unique collaboration between the Circle of All Nations, Carleton University's Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre (Canada), the National Association of Child Care Workers, and Durban University of Technology (South Africa). **It integrates approaches from the disciplines of arts and humanities, social welfare, and cartography**; and it animates therapeutic art creation child and presents new communications methodologies to strengthen child and youth care practices through interactive participatory mapping.
- At its core, this approach centers on Children's Cognitive Story Maps — a new concept introduced in the work — where **children actively initiate and co-create maps that visualize their locational, environmental and social realities, interior landscapes, concerns, and needs**. These story maps go beyond traditional cartography by combining narrative, creative visualization, and spatial representation.
- Engaging child and youth care workers alongside children fosters a collaborative relational research and practice environment. The children's map stories inform the prioritization of critical issues, **enhancing practice and case management, program development, policy-making and promotion and advocacy in child protection and community services**.
- Complementing these grassroots efforts, researchers use provincial and national **digital maps to analyze broader spatial patterns and target focused interventions, creating a dynamic bridge between local lived experiences and systemic responses**.
- The paper explores **various theoretical frameworks** — including Indigenous, Prior Knowledge and Grounded Theory perspectives — to support this integrative methodology, highlighting its potential to **innovate knowledge creation and advance transdisciplinary research** across geographies and sectors.

The Inclusive Mapping preconference workshop and the Children's Mapping Competition focussed on the theme Towards Maps for Everyone. (see the Facebook page of the ICA Commission on Cartography and Children for some reflections on the August conference and the competition). Learners from South Africa embraced this work with great interest and passion.



Professor Taylor considered this new work in Cognitive Children’s Story Mapping his latest contribution to cartography, after cybercartography, and the paper published by the International Journal of Cartography was the last journal article that he coauthored (see “Children’s Cognitive Story Mapping: A Complex South Africa/Canada Transdisciplinary Collaboration).

LATE FRASER TAYLOR’S ATTENTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Late Cartographer Fraser Taylor, twice former president of ICA and initiator of the Barbara Petchinik Children’s Mapping Competition, took a great personal interest in this evolving project. Following his early research in Africa in the 1960s, Taylor noted that **mapping and storytelling** are both human instincts (Routledge Reprint, *Development from Within* (1992) Taylor & Mackenzie). In 1997, he articulated the concept of *Cybercartography* as the organization, presentation, analysis and communication of spatially referenced information on a wide variety of topics of interest to society, presented in dynamic, interactive, multimedia, multisensory and multidisciplinary format.
- Commenting on Casti’s research into *Reflexive Cartography* (2015) Taylor suggested that cartography escape the rigidities of a purely technical topographic approach and concentrate on mapping in every sense of the word, including a social sense of territory. He also asserted that **cartography has an important role to play in establishing a social view of the world** and in linking the local scale of inhabited space with the emerging realities of our increasingly globalized world. He reflected on the need to escape from the rigidity of many theoretical constructs and embrace a greater degree of **trans-disciplinary pluralism** as well as a related need to develop **more innovative methodological approaches** in cartography;
- He considered **Cognitive Story Mapping** his latest contribution to cartographic theory and practice, developed with the project collaborators.



Five of the six maps selected for the 2025 International Conference from South Africa were generated by this project. ICA's President Professor Georg Gartner called the Barbara Petchenik Children's Mapping Competition the jewel in the ICA crown. ICC27 will be hosted in Poland, and its flag went off proudly in a bag from ICC23, hosted in South Africa! With children's cognitive story mapping, cartography is moving in new directions and opening new possibilities for research, knowledge generation and dissemination.

The Late Dr. D. R. Fraser Taylor
Cartouche, Issue 102, p. 77

2025 presented academics and researcher the opportunity to participate in three important conferences within the domain of geography and cartography in Canada. On May 20 -23, Carleton University hosted the joint Canadian Cartographic Association (CCA) and the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) conference (Confluence 2025); and on August 17 - 23, the biennial conference of the International Cartographic Association (ICA), ICC2025, was hosted in Vancouver at Canada Place. I had the good fortune to attend Confluence and ICC2025, including two pre-conference workshops (ICA's Participatory Mapping Working Group (PMWG) and the Inclusive Mapping workshop held in partnership with the Commission of Cartography and Children and the Barbara Petchenik Children's Mapping Competition).

These conferences were preceded by a very sad event for many conference participants. This was the March 22, 2025 passing of the world-renowned cartographer, researcher and professor, Dr. D. R. Fraser Taylor, Director of the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre (GCRC) at Carleton University. Professor Taylor played many leadership roles in all three organizations over multiple decades, and facilitated much networking, project development, publication and innovation in cartography across Canada and internationally with his tireless work. He was honoured throughout all the conferences with moments of silence, speeches, and the announcement of a Fraser Taylor Geomatics Award by the Canadian Institute of Geomatics, a co-host of ICC25. Busy till the end, he supported the ICA's Participatory Mapping Working Group's successful application for SSHRC funding for a three-day workshop held at the University of British Columbia, led by Professors John Corbett and its chair, Jirka Pánek.

He launched the Barbara Petchenik Children's Map Competition in 1993 and in 2005, was actively engaged in a new advance in this work – our joint Carleton University Children's Cognitive Story Mapping initiative with Circle of All Nations (founder, Indigenous elder William Commanda) and the National Association of Child Care Workers and the Durban University of Technology in South Africa. As General Editor of the Elsevier Modern Cartographic Series, he had also launched two new book publications, one based in Central America, and the other in cyberspace – a book exploring the implications of Artificial Intelligence for cartography. I myself was most fortunate to have Professor Taylor as my thesis and post-doctoral research supervisor for my research into the Circle of All Nations environmental work and legacy of North American Indigenous Elder William Commanda, Algonquin of the Ottawa River Watershed; thereafter, I supported his research and other work over the last eight years of his life, and, indeed, I am grateful to have learned from such a virtuoso.

The following graphic offers a brief overview of his academic priorities.

A Retrospective Overview

Professor Fraser Taylor developed and pursued a remarkable and influential research plan that guided his academic life.

He undertook humble and high-profile tasks himself, including during the decades past any official retirement, right till his passing at the age of eighty-seven.



- It included **teaching** and tireless dedication to scholarship and research in his mentoring hundreds of undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students of diverse backgrounds;
- He made **international outreach** in the domain of cartography, beginning with a “development from within” approach to community-based research in Kenya in the 1960s, then advancing innovative ideas as mapping embraced the technological development over the decades, and introducing and developing the domain of Cybercartography;
- He was very successful in securing **research funding** by developing innovative projects with communities, including Indigenous, academics and governments;
- He assumed roles of **global leadership** with cartographic associations, national governments and the United Nations;
- He was deeply interested in a wide range of locational topics of social importance; and was committed to **publication** of the findings; he served as Editorial Board Member of the ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information, and as General Editor for the Elsevier Modern Cartography Series where he just negotiated the preparation of a publication on Artificial Intelligence;
- He positioned the **achievements** of his team to influence research and secure support nationally and internationally, as witnessed by his many awards and acknowledgement.

Additional information about Professor Taylor and his work can be accessed at <https://gcr.ccarleton.ca>; for more information about his memorial, please contact me directly (romolavt@gmail.com).

Recent Children's Mapping Activities from Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, Carleton University

ICC Newsletter, Issue 34, December 2025

The Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre at Carleton University and its partners, National Association of Child Care Workers, Durban University of Technology and Circle of All Nations, continued with active research in the transdisciplinary children's story mapping initiative with vulnerable learners in South Africa. It has been advanced since 2022, under the leadership of late Professor Fraser Taylor, who had launched the Barbara Petchenik Children's Mapping Competition in 1993.



During the past year, the team offered five lectures to undergraduate students on the integration of mapping in child and youth care work practice and held eight recorded team meetings with child and youth care workers. A presentation on the generative, therapeutic art, photoatlas and carto-semiotic components of the work was made at the joint Confluence conference of the Canadian Cartographic Association and Canadian Association of Geographers in May 2025, and one conference and two preconference presentations were made at the International Cartographic Association conference, ICC25. Details of the conference presentation "Children's cognitive story mapping: integrating child care work practice, art creation and cartography" may be found in Abstracts of the ICA series. The comprehensive paper Children's cognitive story mapping: a complex South Africa/Canada transdisciplinary collaboration was published by the International Journal of Cartography in 2005.



Five of the six submissions to the 2025 competition from South Africa came from this project. The learners are actively mapping locational and eco-social issues that are of concern to them, and these have contributed to evolving program, policy and advocacy work. This, in part, explains the development of the cognitive story mapping theorization.

Two other children's mapping initiatives were undertaken, linked with Circle of All Nations. One was a ten-week heritage mapping project for newcomer youth in Winnipeg, Canada. Undertaken with the Indigenous leadership of Turtle Island Project and the Immigrant Partnership Winnipeg, youth engaged in field trip and mapping activities to learn about the natural history, Indigenous history, settlement history, heritage, culture, environment and contemporary realities in their new homelands. The youth created maps, a photo collage and a video to record the project. This type of mapping practice has potential for positive application with refugee children.

The third mapping activity was initiated at a Village School in rural Massachusetts, United States. Led by teacher Martin Brown, it is grounded in nature theme-based research (on earth and rocks, water and ice, fire and heat, and air and wind), consistent with the teachings of late Indigenous Elder William Commanda, Circle of All Nations, with upcoming work focused on place-based education, and mapping the significant rock formations on the property.



The latter two groups will make submissions to the next children's mapping competition.
Info and pictures: Romola V. Thumbadoo, Canada