

*September 8, 2005*

## **Calgarian honoured as first recipient of literacy award**

Calgary... Leonard Duby of Calgary has been awarded the first Alberta Council of the Federation Literacy Award, which recognizes excellence and achievement in literacy. The award was presented by Dave Hancock, Minister of Advanced Education, during a ceremony at Bow Valley College on September 8. Canada's premiers created the Council of the Federation Literacy Award to increase awareness of the importance of literacy.

"Mr. Duby is truly an inspiration to adult learners everywhere. His hard work and perseverance are remarkable - I am touched by his courage and by his achievements. Presenting this award to him is a fitting way to recognize International Literacy Day and International Adult Learners' Week," said Hancock.

Duby experienced numerous medical challenges as a young person and was told he would never read or write. He overcame these challenges, took literacy courses and learned to read. Today, he is a public speaker on the importance of literacy. "When I got the call that I was the recipient of the award, I was speechless. This has been a very proud and humbling event for me and I will always cherish it," said Duby.

"The example of Mr. Duby and everyone nominated for the award shows that learning is becoming more and more important to Albertans. As we look to position Alberta's advanced learning system for the future, literacy programs are definitely part of the picture. All Albertans need learning opportunities to maximize their potential," Hancock added.

In Alberta, 26 nominations were received. A selection committee, comprising seven volunteers involved in adult learning programs across Alberta, assessed the nominations and unanimously chose Duby to receive the award.

Alberta Advanced Education provides \$4.4 million annually to community-based literacy programs, including 73 volunteer tutor adult literacy programs and 49 family literacy programs. Community Adult Learning Councils receive \$6 million each year to support their mandate to address adult learning needs including adult literacy.

- 30 -

### **Editor's note:**

A backgrounder is attached. A digital photo can be obtained by calling Advanced Education Communications at 422-5400.

### **Media enquiries may be directed to:**

Cameron Traynor  
Advanced Education Communications  
780-422-5400

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

### **Backgrounder**

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## **Biography Leonard Duby**

- As a child, Leonard Duby was seriously injured in a car accident and experienced numerous medical problems. He subsequently had to relearn basic physical skills and, for many years, struggled with memory loss and speech impairments. He no longer has peripheral vision in his right eye.
- In the years following, Mr. Duby suffered spinal meningitis twice.
- Then, his left hand was crushed in a workplace incident. While recuperating from this injury, he joined the Reading Foundation and began learning to read.
- Mr. Duby has served as a volunteer with the Literacy Alberta board of directors, Movement for Canadian Literacy, Calgary Urban Project Society and Calgary John Howard Society.
- Mr. Duby is currently a public speaker for Literacy Alberta's BLAST (Bureau of Learners from Alberta Speakers Team) on the importance of adult literacy and learning.
- He continues to work with a tutor, through the Calgary Public Library, to improve his reading and writing.

## **Council of the Federation Literacy Award**

- Each province and territory will annually award a medallion and certificate to an individual or organization demonstrating excellence and outstanding achievement in literacy.
- The first awards were announced during the Council of the Federation meeting in August and are currently being presented at events across the country.
- More information about the award is available on the Advanced Education website:  
<http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/other/literacy/literacy.asp>

- 30 -

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