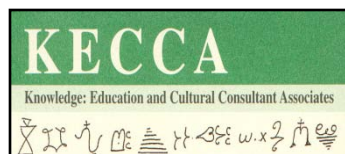


# Elders Need to Share to be Healthy

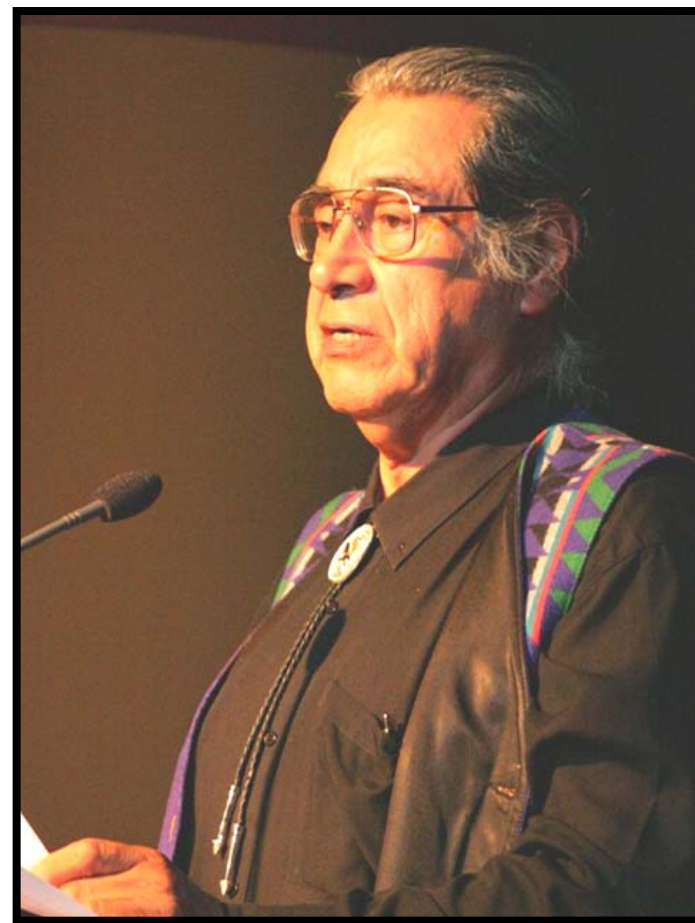
Aboriginal Experiences in Aging Symposium  
*Setting Research and Policy Priorities*  
Saskatoon, SK; September 17-19, 2008

## Albert Marshall

Elder, Mi'kmaq Nation,  
Eskasoni Band, NS



- Knowledge, Education and Cultural Consultant Associates
- Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources
- Institute for Integrative Science & Health, Cape Breton University



contact: [albertdmarshall@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:albertdmarshall@ns.sympatico.ca)

## **Abstract (Albert Marshall):**

This presentation will focus on spiritual issues that Elders face as they age. People are very concerned and aware of physical health issues, but sometimes they forget that health also has a spiritual component. For many Elders, a spiritual issue is the survival of their culture. Elders need to share their traditional knowledge to be healthy. Knowledge is spirit. We use it for a while. It is living and we are the conduit. It is a gift, passed on through many people. It is not ours to keep. We've got to pass it on. In sharing, I am living up to the responsibility of why I was given that knowledge. Elders know so much, but often they aren't given the opportunity to share in a meaningful way in their own communities. When there are only a few Elders in a community, and many more youth, Elders also worry about their ability to share the culture with so many. As a result, Elders fear that the culture won't be passed on and that it will die with them. This creates tremendous stress, depression, and disempowerment. Elders are not sure that the message is getting out there (to youth) of how to go forward in this world. The message is "Two-Eyed Seeing". It is not enough to go through life with one perspective; we must embrace all the tools we have, those from our culture and those from other cultures. The notion of Two-Eyed Seeing is very simple, but effective. You are not putting yourself above or below. You are equal to, but part and parcel of, the whole. For wholeness to be complete, it needs me, it needs you. So why feel inferior? Mainstream education is essential in this process of "Two-Eyed Seeing". The current education system is in no way reflective of how the Mi'kmaq see themselves surviving in the world. With Two-Eyed Seeing, youth will be educated in a way that does not sacrifice the spirit or Mi'kmaq identity. The First Nations scholar would then be able to weave back and forth between two worlds. Unless there is this weaving between the two worlds, Elders are very much afraid that justice won't be done to traditional knowledge when it is documented. Elders are anxious for young people to come forward and document Mi'kmaq wisdom.



Eskasoni,  
Unama'ki,  
Mi'kmaq Nation



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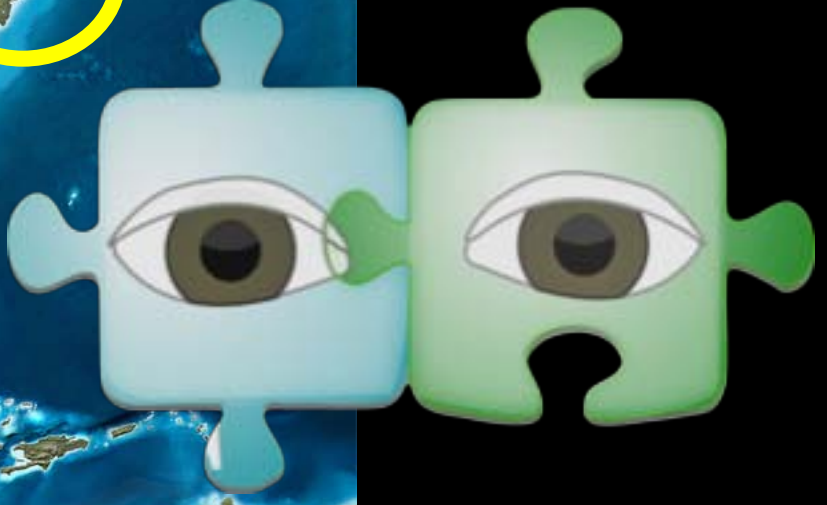
Mi'kmaq Elders

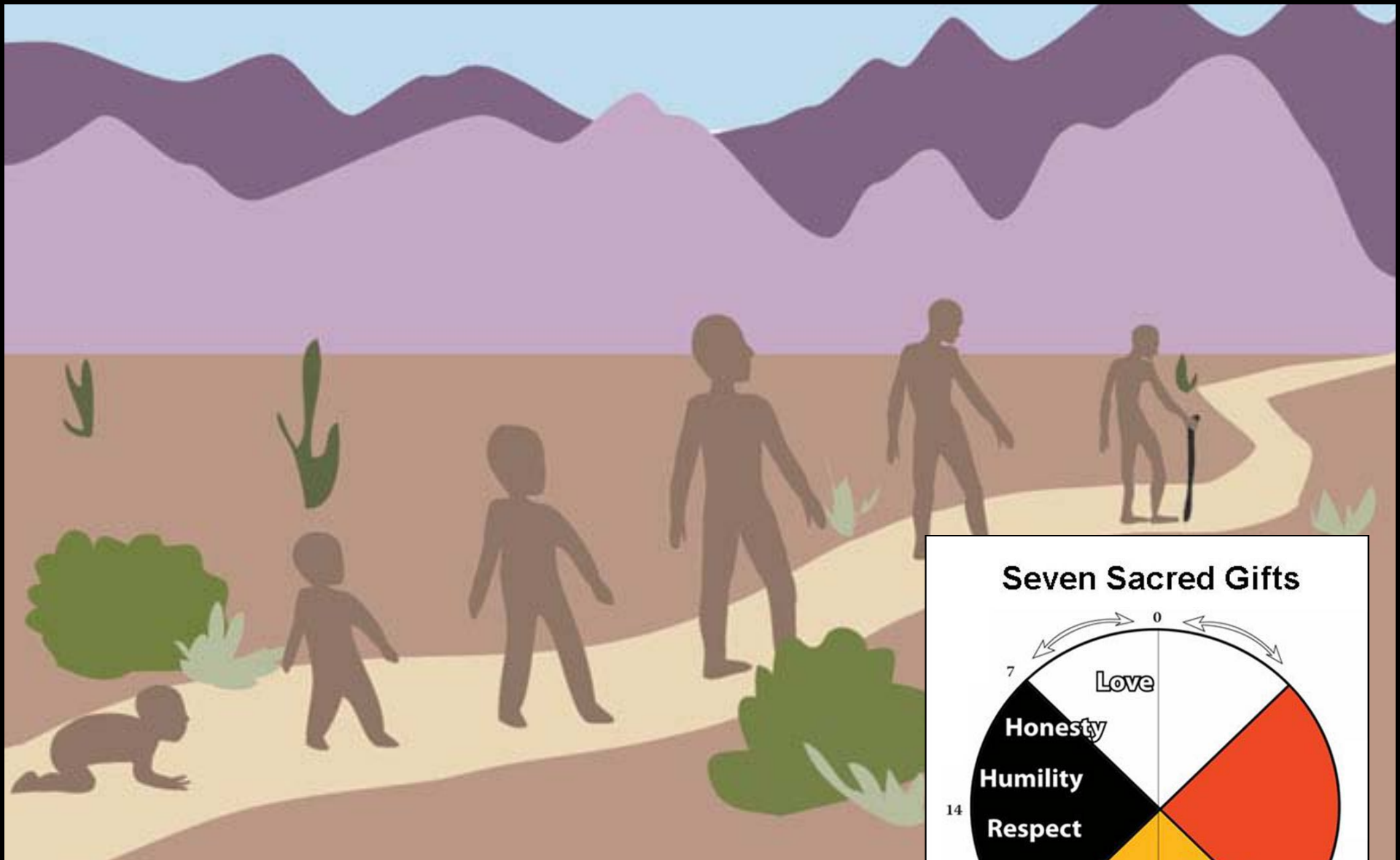
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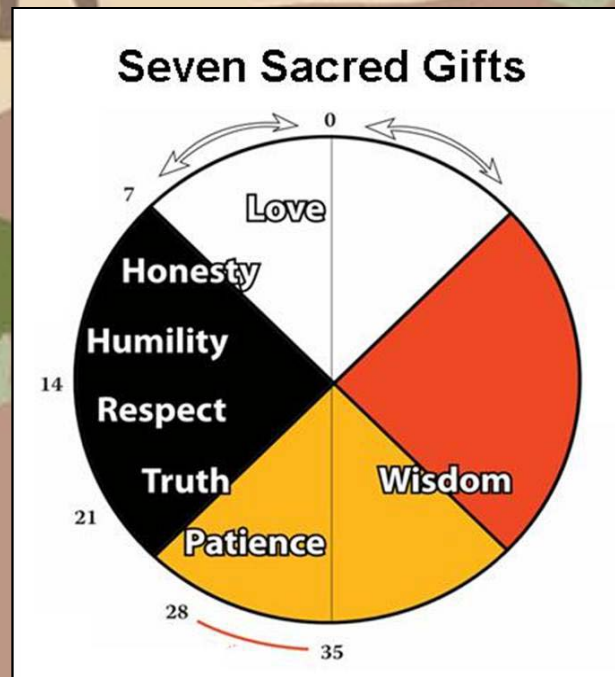
Mi'kmaqway Debert

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# Journey of Life



Elders know so much, but often we aren't given the opportunity to share in a meaningful way in our own communities.



Knowledge  
is spirit.

It is a gift,  
passed on  
through  
many people.

We must  
pass it on.



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# Pemi Pungek Mi'kma'ki

This poster is dedicated to all Mi'kmaq Elders.

This poster is one in a series made by the Institute for Integrative Science and Health at Cape Breton University and Mi'kmaq from National Elders of Cape Breton. Integrative Science brings together Indigenous and Western scientific knowledge and ways of knowing for better education.

This poster is called Pemi Pungek Mi'kma'ki, which means an anniversary year in the Mi'kmaq traditional calendar. On the outside, it shows the four seasons and the 12 months of the year. On the inside, it shows the land, water, and sky over a full year. The pictures of plants, animals, and weather show the signs of changing months or seasons. The pictures of people show when to do traditional and modern activities. Read this poster in a circle to see the cycle of the seasons. Spring is on the left, summer is on the bottom, fall is on the right, and winter is on the top.

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We Elders need to share our understandings of traditional knowledge to be healthy.

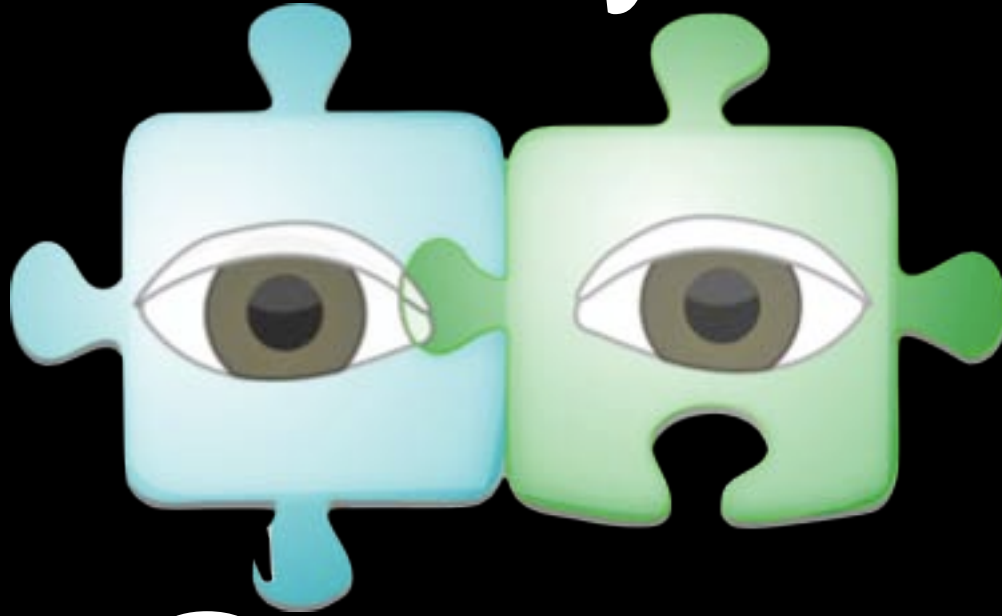


In sharing, I am trying to live up to the responsibility of why I was given that knowledge.



It is not enough to go through life with one perspective; we must embrace all the tools we have ...

Two-Eyed



*Seeing*

# You are equal to, and part and parcel of, the whole.





**Wela'liog**

**Thank you**


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## Aboriginal Experiences in Aging Symposium: Setting Research and Policy Priorities

Very little is known about the aging issues and service needs of older Aboriginal peoples. Over the next two days, First Nation and Métis Leaders, community members, leading Canadian researchers, and policy makers are meeting to consider the aging experiences of Aboriginal Peoples during the first National ***Aboriginal Experiences in Aging Symposium: Setting Research and Policy Priorities***.

A series of invited speakers will introduce topics and issues to be explored in discussion with a broad group of stakeholder attendees. Organizers of the symposium are Sylvia Abonyi, PhD. (SPHERU, University of Saskatchewan), Mark Rosenberg, PhD. (University of Queens), and Kathi Wilson, PhD. (University of Toronto) - Dr. Mark Rosenberg noted that:

"We are thrilled to be in Saskatoon for this very first National Conference on First Nations and Métis Seniors, bringing together representatives from the First Nations, the Métis Nation, researchers and policy makers."

The symposium will take place at the Radisson Hotel in Saskatoon, September 18 and 19, 2008. Please direct all media inquiries to Ms. Claire Bélanger-Parker.

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