

## SYNOPSIS OF GIVING VOICE

By

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This is a biography of Dr. Joanne MacArthur McLeod, a disabled Frederictonian, who has devoted her life to bringing awareness to the disabled person and giving a voice to a silent minority. Through perseverance she garnered a high end education, several distinguished honours and multiple achievement awards that include an Order of Canada, a doctorate and a Queens Council appointment. Armed with fortitude, stamina and old fashioned back-bone, she has challenged the prevailing lack of awareness and absence of provisions in place for paraplegics in the province of New Brunswick.

During her Grade 11 year at Canterbury Regional High School, a car accident left her a paraplegic, confining her physical activities to a wheelchair. After two years she continued her studies and became the first paraplegic to graduate from high school in the province of New Brunswick.

Each award, each achievement, each accomplishment seemed to vie for top spot in Joanne's heart. In 1991 this acclaimed activist, lawyer and volunteer earned a major coup for disabled persons everywhere.

This time she merited the Individual Human Rights Achievement Award from the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies. The minister responsible for the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission summed up the gratitude of the government and the people of New Brunswick when he said: "During a period in our history when it is most common to hear people fiercely defending their rights, privileges, and advantages, it is especially refreshing to honour someone who has dedicated her life to protecting the rights and improving the condition of others."

Throughout the 90s, accolades and awards continued to follow - the Paul Harris Fellowship Award, the Distinguished Citizen Award, and the burial of the millennium time capsule and Human Rights Award in 1997. By 2002 Dr. Joanne MacArthur McLeod was at Government House in New Brunswick's esteemed capital receiving the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in the presence of Lieutenant-Governor Trenholme and Archbishop Nutter.

Today Joanne is still active, recently playing a prominent position in the Rick Hansen Medal Relay in the 25th Anniversary of the Man in Motion Tour.

Joanne's tireless efforts are worthy of recording for the sake of posterity, for future generations, that they will know the history behind access taken for granted. Every time a door swings open, every time a rest room stall is wide enough to accommodate their chair, every time we, the public, see a motorized wheel chair, it is important to see the struggle, the ground gained by a forerunner in bringing awareness and voice to those who otherwise may have remained silent for generations. I personally want this story told and I am honoured to have been chosen the one to tell it.