

Raoul McKay, Ph.D. (1934-2014)

Raoul McKay was the son of Charles “Bob” McKay (1896-1993) and Marie-Anne Belcourt. His paternal grandparents were Charles McKay (1846-1926) and Caroline Larocque.¹ His maternal grandparents were Antoine Belcourt and Victoire St. Cyr. Early members of the McKay family settled along the Assiniboine River in the communities of St. François Xavier, Pigeon Lake and Baie St. Paul (St. Eustache).

Raoul’s great-aunt, Josephite McKay was married to Joseph Arcand who served in the 1885 Northwest Resistance at Duck Lake and was one of the Métis sent to rescue the men surrounded by Middleton at Tourond’s Coulée. Joseph was arrested on May 19, 1885, tried for treason-felony and sentenced to a jail term of one-year on August 14, 1885. At his trial, Father L. Cochin spoke on his behalf urging leniency. He is credited with saving the prisoners held a Poundmaker’s Camp near Battleford.

Raoul McKay received the Manitoba Métis Federation’s Distinguished Leadership in Education Award in 2009, and was awarded an Aboriginal Achievement Inspire Laureate in 2010 for education. They describe his contributions in this way:

Dr. McKay dedicated his life as a bi-lingual educator influencing thousands of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal high school and university students and earned four university degrees, including a Ph.D. in history from the University of Toronto. He developed Indigenous programs and courses at Trent University, Lakehead University, and McMaster University and was the founding head of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba. In consultation with Indigenous communities, he established programs such as the Pre-Medicine Program for Native People and social studies programs for public schools.

Dr. McKay has assisted First Nations and Métis communities in their aspirations by promoting sovereignty, enabling them to narrate their own history and creating educational, political and economic systems for the betterment of their citizens. In addition, Dr. McKay is an influential documentary film producer. His work includes two 13-part series’ entitled *La Voix des Mechif* I and II, aired on APTN.

¹ Charles McKay was the son of Ignace McKay born June 1808 at St. François Xavier and Josephite Bercier a Métif from Baie St. Paul born January 1818 at St. Francois Xavier.



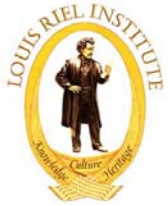
Raoul McKay was born into a trilingual (English, French, Michif) farming family of eleven children in 1934. He entered St. Paul's College in 1953 and later received BA (1965) and BEd (1966) from the University. He taught at Elphinstone School, started the Shilo Science Fair, and was Vice-President and President of the Shilo Teachers' Society (1960s).

He taught courses in Native Studies at Brandon University and, in 1972, joined the Department of Native Studies at Trent University (Peterborough, Ontario). He completed an MA thesis entitled "The History of Treaty Four, 1873-1905" at the University of Manitoba in 1973, and a doctoral dissertation entitled "Fighting for survival: the Swampy Cree of Treaty No. 5 in an era of transition, 1875-1930," at the University of Toronto in 1991. He became Head of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba where he encouraged interdisciplinary learning and co-founded the Pre-Medicine Program for Aboriginal people. He served as Chair of the Manitoba Advisory Council on Métis Arts and Cultural Activities and was a member of the Review Panel of the Powley Decision for the Province of Manitoba.

Raoul McKay and his wife Iris incorporated First Voice Multimedia in 1997. He uses his knowledge on the history and life of Native people from both the written and oral tradition of the Métis and First Nations people. He has done a number of television and radio shows as well as interviews on a variety of themes regarding Native people. His other works include *The Life and Works of the Woodland Artists*, *The Life and Works of Daphne Odjig*, *St. Laurent Goes to Washington* (the story of a Métis community's participation at the National Museum of the American Indian), and *Standing Tall* (a production depicting the history and community involvement of the Louis Riel Institute's Standing Tall program in two Winnipeg inner city schools).

Reference:

Raoul McKay. "A History of the McKay Family of St. Eustache, Manitoba, 1846 to the Present." Submission to the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, February 15, 1994.



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