

Rodh, Albertine (Lafferty). (1931-2006)

By Albert Lafferty and Lawrence Barkwell

Albertine Lafferty, the daughter of Joe and Celine Lafferty, was born on February 8, 1931 in the Métis community of Fort Providence, Northwest Territories (NWT). Fort Providence is situated on the banks of the Mackenzie River, which also known as “Deh Cho” in the local South Slavey language. Albertine primarily spoke Mackenzie District Michif-French until the age of 13 when she began learning English. In 1940, Albertine’s parents, Joseph and Celine Laviolette-Lafferty moved their family from Fort Providence to Fort Simpson in the pursuit of employment.

A descendant of the early Mackenzie District Métis families and of the Dene, Albertine made a significant contribution to her community. She served on many public boards, including the Deh Cho Health, Social Services Authority and the papal visit co-ordinating board in 1984 and 1987. She was also one of the founders of the Native Women’s Association of the NWT in the 1970s. In the years that followed, the Association helped educate women on fetal alcohol syndrome, AIDS, family violence, foster parenting and other issues of importance to northern families and to women as nurturers and caregivers.

Albertine was also involved with the Métis Nation in the NWT from the 1970s, making significant contributions concerning Métis heritage, culture, families, genealogy and community history in the Mackenzie River District. In the late 1970s, she served as the Métis Local President, on and off again until 2000, for the Fort Simpson Métis Nation – Local No. 52 advocating Métis rights, and equality of treatment for Métis citizens on par with other aboriginal peoples. During this time, Albertine travelled across the NWT attending numerous political meetings and assemblies as well as national Aboriginal meetings in southern Canada as part of the NWT delegation. As already noted, Rodh also served on many public boards, including the health board and the papal visit coordinating board in 1984 and 1987. She worked with the Dehcho First Nation Leadership Executive Committee and was a board member for the Métis Nation of the Northwest Territories. Albertine was also a founding member of the Native Women's Association after working on the planning committee in 1976. She remained active with the association for approximately 20 years.

In 1994, Albertine was awarded the Métis Nation’s Order of the Shawl, the highest honour that can be bestowed upon a Métis woman. In 2004, Albertine Rodh was the recipient of the NWT Wise Women Award designated by the NWT Status of Women Council. Albertine was well respected across the North and is described by her daughter as a “friend, confidant, care-giver, listener, leader, elder and healer.” Albertine continued to give of herself to the community by serving as a Métis Elder advisor until her passing in 2006.



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