Dan and Mary Lou Smoke are an exceptional couple, who for many years, have fostered and advanced racial harmony and the elimination of discrimination in our community. It has been through their individual and collective efforts of sharing knowledge of the First Nations faith, history and culture that they have greatly enhanced cross-cultural understanding, healed and improved the climate of race relations in London, and provided new means of overcoming barriers and differences.

In recognizing as much, the City of London, Ontario named Dan and Mary Lou Smoke to the 2001 Mayor's New Year's Honours List in the "Humanitarian" category.

Dan and Mary Lou are positive role models and are held in high esteem within the Native and non-Native communities. Dan and Mary Lou often work together conducting opening and closing ceremonies at events such as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, UN Human Rights Day, National Aboriginal Day, International Women’s Day, Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre (Dec. 6th), V-Day for Anti Violence Against Indigenous Women, and special dinners, banquets such as the “Red Leaf Dinner” for PM Jean Cretien at the London Convention Center in 1996.

Since 1991 Dan and Mary Lou Smoke have been the hosts of the First Nations radio program "Smoke Signals" (CHRW 94.9 FM Radio Western, University of Western Ontario), a radio newsmagazine program that bridges the gap of understanding between Native and non-Native world views. They are also commentators on the local London TV station, CTV which is owned by the CTV Bell Globe Media Family. They reach an audience of 8 million viewers in Southern Ontario.

Dan is a member of the Seneca Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy. Among his many credits, Dan is an Adjunct Professor at Western University. He has been an invited speaker at the AGM of the Canadian Association of Journalists in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 2005. Dan has been working with traditional knowledge carriers from many Nations which include: Cree, Lakota, Ojibway, Cayuga, Seneca, Oneida, and Mohawk Nations of the Haudenosaunee. He has also been working with the Ojibway Medicine Man Isaac Day to learn the pipe and the fasting ceremonies. Both he and Mary Lou help to conduct purification ceremonies for the people when requested, and have been holding New Year's Eve sweat lodge ceremonies for the past 17 years in the London area.

Mary Lou, a member of the Ojibway Nation, is a gifted writer, singer, guitarist and traditional drummer who willingly volunteers and shares her talents with the community at large. Mary Lou has performed internationally (Germany, Holland), nationally (1976 Olympics) and locally (Grand Theatre, London and Ontario Place, Toronto). She also performs at traditional pow wows and Aboriginal Music Festivals. She is the founding member of a local women's drumming group and has contributed to the healing and well being of Native and non-Native women and to a greater understanding between women of many faiths. The drum group is called the "Ogitchidaw Kwe Wag Singers."

"Through their extraordinary volunteer efforts, Dan and Mary Lou Smoke are an inspiration to those who believe in an inclusive community where new knowledge and understanding can lead to healing, harmony and peaceful co-existence."
Since 2006, the Smokes have taught a course at Western University for the First Nations Studies Department, cross-listed with the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, entitled, "The Representation of Indigenous Issues in the Mainstream and Alternative News Media." It is a third year journalism/media course housed in the Media and Information Technoculture Department. In 2008, they were awarded the University Students Council of UWO's Teachers of Excellence Award for their teaching methods, which include ceremonial protocols. Since 2009, they have taught a course, entitled, "An Introduction to Indigenous Spirituality" at Brescia University College, an affiliate of Western University. Brescia University is the only women’s University in Canada today. In 2013 Mary Lou and Dan were appointed as Adjunct Professors of the First Nations Studies Department at Western University.

In 2013, Mary Lou was selected to be one of the YMCA's Southwestern Ontario Women of Excellence Award Winners in the Category of Education and Culture. They continue to be Cultural Counsellors for a number of Colleges, Universities, Agencies and Organizational Service Providers.

For the past 9 years they have been the SW Ontario Elders for the “Call To The Bar” Convocation ceremony for graduating Lawyers for the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Mary Lou and Dan are the Elders for the Thames Valley District School Board. They work closely with the TVDSB Aboriginal Liaison to help provide Cultural Competency and Ceremonial protocols. They also visit the schools to provide cultural presentations. They have worked with the Board for the past 12 years.

In Indigenous Culture, the term “Elder” is conferred by the community. Mary Lou and Dan like to be called Teachers and Helpers since they are still young. But, they have been helping at the Dodem Kannhsa Clan Lodge for Elders at the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada (ANAC) since 2000. The Lodge was opened to the public in 1998 following the lead of the KUMIK Elders Lodge in Gatineau, Quebec at the ANAC National Headquarters. They were invited to the KUMIK on several occasions to provide ceremonial protocol, cultural workshops, public speaking, storytelling, Eagle Feather presentations, and cultural networking with Ottawa Organizations like the Wabano Health Center and Federal Government offices.

The Smokes have conducted the Opening Ceremonies for the R.W.B. Jackson Lecture, at the University of Toronto on the First Nations Education in Canada. In 2013 the Lecturers were the Right Honourable Paul Martin and the Former National Chief of The Assembly of First Nations Shawn A-in-chut Atleo.

They both cherish their role as Grandparents to 13 year old Grandson, Ryan. Ryan lives near the Ontario Police College, near Aylmer, Ontario in Springfield. His grandparents are the Elders for the Native Recruits attending the OPC. They conduct a Sunrise Ceremony annually on June 21st, and they participate in the “March Past,” graduation Convocation of the Police Recruits.

Mary Lou and Dan Smoke
Adjunct Professors
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