

## Tribute to Jeannette McCullough

Jeannette McCullough was a gifted Shamanic practitioner, educator, healer and passionate advocate of the power of Indigenous knowledges and ways of being, to bring wholeness to all our relations – human and more than human. Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, her father was a political activist who on fleeing the troubles in Ireland in the 1940s, immigrated to Canada where he met and married Jeannette’s mother. As a result Jeannette’s life and work were strongly informed by her working class, activist and Gaelic roots. Initially training and working as a Registered



Nurse, Jeannette subsequently chose to channel her healing capacities through shamanic, psycho-spiritual and community based work. Training through the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, Jeannette was a graduate of the Foundation’s three year program in Advanced Shamanism and Shamanic Studies and a qualified Shamanic teacher. Jeannette went on to share this work, often freely, with the communities of Toronto and beyond, where she would run “Journey Work” and “Medicine for the Earth Circles”. She was a generous and wise teacher and much loved by her students. Always at the vanguard of transformation, among many other roles, Jeannette was the Chair of the Spirituality in Health-care Network and key member and supporter of the Transformative Learning Community (formerly the Transformative Learning Centre, University of Toronto) through their Spirit Matters Gatherings and other community events.

Our first meeting in the spring of 2004 is memorable. As a newly hired professor at the University of Saskatchewan and newcomer to Canada who was looking to bring a holistic approach to my own academic and activist work, I attended the first Spirit



Matters Gathering. It was there, that I was drawn to attend Jeannette's workshop on Shamanic Healing. Whilst we didn't connect personally at that time, Jeannette and the workshop had a powerful impact on me. Our next meeting would be in the fall of 2008 when I attended an intimate four day, land-based retreat of mainly healers, artists and activists in Bancroft, Ontario. It was here that Jeannette and I first really connected – her beaming face and words of welcome to me from that time, are very much with me today. It was some months following this time, that I had a significant dream about Jeannette and I working side by side towards the vision of 'planetary re-indigenization' that seemed to be fermenting inside of, and around me.

Both the dream and Jeannette's words proved to be true. When I moved to Toronto later in 2009, Jeannette stuck by my side, inviting me to her home, community events, and introducing me to her friends, including a wider circle of people whom she thought could be helpful in establishing the work. Held within the warmth, humour and straightforwardness of our friendship were also some very frank discussions – she was a great 'critical friend'. Jeannette went on to be a founding Board member of the Koru International Network (AIR's predecessor), a strong advocate and supporter of the Radical Human Ecology Work (weblink) and of the Alliance for Intergenerational Resilience, right up until her passing in August 2016.

In material terms, Jeannette lived a modest and simple life. Alongside her friends and community circles, central to who she was, were her shamanic tools and the library of books that helped inform her practice. Whilst I was on occasion a fortunate recipient of her shamanic practice, I was also often treated to the wisdom of her books. Either in person or by email, Jeannette would often suggest or feed me bits and pieces that she thought would be helpful to the work, from this rich collection of writings. Her insight, acumen and timing were often remarkable.

Given her unfailing belief in the revitalization of Indigenous knowledges and ways of being within all cultures, and the collective capacity of human and our other than human kin to heal our planet, it seems entirely in alignment, that the proceeds from the sale of Jeannette's beloved and marvelous collection of books be used to seed the "AIR Indigenous Internship Award Fund". In keeping with AIR's aims and Jeannette's approach this fund will be used to support the recipients (scholars and practitioners) to learn about and contribute to AIR's work of Indigenous, intercultural and intergenerational approaches to

human-ecological wellbeing whilst interacting with AIR's international community.

Jeannette your powerful legacy lives on, continuing to ripple out in the lives of all you knew and interacted with. We are richer for having known you.

Thank you.

Lewis Williams,

Founding Director, AIR.