

imagineNATIVE Launches August Schellenberg Award of Excellence Calls for Donations to support new Acting Prize in Honour of Late Actor

July 15, 2015 – The imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival invites the public to support the new August Schellenberg Award of Excellence, an annual prize that recognizes significant professional and personal achievement by an Indigenous Actor of all genders. The Award will be funded through individual public donations and will be presented at the 16th imagineNATIVE Festival, October 14-18, 2015 in Toronto.

Designed in partnership with actor, singer and writer Joan Karasevich to honour her husband, the late actor August Schellenberg and the spirit of his work, the annual award will be presented to a gifted Indigenous actor from Turtle Island who has made a significant impact with their work.

Montreal-born Mohawk actor August Schellenberg has performed in hundreds of stage and film productions both in Canada and the US. His extensive list of appearances in theatre, film and television include, most recognizably, as Randolph Johnson in the Free Willy franchise, Black Robe, and CBC's North of 60. He received three Genie award nominations, winning once for his role in Black Robe. He was nominated for an Emmy for Best Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or Movie for his role as Chief Sitting Bull in Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee in 2007, and played the titular role in an all-First Nations version of Shakespeare's King Lear at Ottawa's National Arts Centre in 2012.

A selection committee comprised of Joan Karasevich, stage and film actor, puppeteer and musician Jani Lauzon, and a representative from imagineNATIVE will select a pool of eligible candidates from Turtle Island for the Award. The recipient will be chosen based on the longevity and impact of their career as well as their professionalism and involvement in mentorship and community work. The Award will be presented as part of imagineNATIVE's Awards Show at the TIFF Bell Lightbox on October 17, 2015.

imagineNATIVE is seeking public donations to fund a cash award to the recipient along with any necessary travel and accommodation expenses. Donations to the August Schellenberg Award of Excellence Fund can be made through the online tool [Canada Helps](#) . Tax receipts will be issued via Canada Helps.

“We are absolutely delighted to partner with Joan Karasevich to introduce this new award honouring the legendary actor August Schellenberg,” said Jason Ryle, imagineNATIVE’s Executive Director. “Augie was a trailblazer in film, television and theatre who inspired many. We call on the public to help support an annual award that will be given to an actor who reflects the spirit of Augie and his work.”

For more information and to donate, visit [Canada Helps](#) and select ‘August Schellenberg Award of Excellence’ from the drop-down list.