



## PRESS RELEASE

### THE COMMISSION DES SERVICES JURIDIQUES PRESENTS THE 2019 ROBERT-SAUVÉ AWARDS

**Montreal, November 8, 2019** - On November 7, 2019, M<sup>e</sup> Yvan Niquette, Chairman of the Commission des services juridiques, proudly presented the 2019 Robert-Sauvé Awards in Montreal. The awards were created in order to recognize the exceptional contribution of individuals to promoting the rights of the less fortunate. The prize is named after the founding chairman of legal aid in Québec, the Honourable Robert Sauvé, who was Chairman of the Commission des services juridiques from 1972 to 1977. One award is presented to a person from within the legal aid network and another to a member of the general public.

This year, the Robert-Sauvé Award in the Legal Aid Network category was bestowed on **M<sup>e</sup> Rodrigue Joncas** for his outstanding community involvement and his exceptional dedication to the clients of the Community Legal Centre of the Lower St. Lawrence/Gaspé Region. The winner of the 2019 Robert-Sauvé Award in the General Public category is **Mr. Michel Purcell** for his exceptional community involvement and outstanding dedication to community street work in the Regional County Municipality (RCM) of Maskinongé.

#### **M<sup>e</sup> Rodrigue Joncas**

M<sup>e</sup> Joncas has practised law for the past 43 years, including 28 years within the legal aid network.

A proud Gaspesian, he began his career in private practice, where he remained until 1989. M<sup>e</sup> Joncas then joined the Community Legal Centre of the Lower St. Lawrence/Gaspé Region, first in the Gaspé office and, from 2000 to June 2017, in the Rimouski office.

M<sup>e</sup> Joncas is a lawyer who likes his clients and treats them with great respect and empathy and puts his heart into what he does.

While in the legal aid network, he was involved in a number of community initiatives, including, to name but a few, as founding member of the organization Place des Hommes, in the Rimouski region. He was also chair of the board of Ressource d'aide aux personnes handicapées for eight years, from 2005 to 2013.

Moreover, as an elected municipal official, he sat on the advisory committee on poverty, where he shared his experience involving the clients of the legal aid network.

He also put his talents to work on behalf of the syndic of the Bar, as corresponding syndic, and worked within the regional Bar, as section president.

Lastly, M<sup>e</sup> Joncas was recognized by his peers within the criminal legal system when he had the honour of being awarded the 2017 Antonio Lamer Prize by the Association québécoise des avocats et avocates de la défense (AQAAD). This award recognizes excellence in a career devoted to law and justice.

**Mr. Michel Purcell**

Mr. Purcell, who studied advertising design and special education, is the coordinator of the community street work organization TrueC (Travail de rue communautaire) of the RCM of Maskinongé, an organization he has headed for nearly 25 years.

He is a committed worker and a trailblazer in rural street work. He was involved in founding community street work in the RCM of Maskinongé.

He is an outstanding fighter and mobilizer who knows how to defend the interests of the poorest within our society so that, collectively, solutions can be found to deal with the many issues at stake, such as hyper sexualization, lack of communication, the increase and development of serious mental health problems, and rising homelessness.

He is one of the founding members of the Association des Travailleurs et Travailleuses de rue du Québec (ATTrueQ) and the Regroupement des organismes communautaires du Québec en travail de rue (ROCQTR).

**About the Commission des services juridiques**

The Commission des services juridiques is the agency charged with applying the *Act respecting legal aid and the provision of certain other legal services* in Québec. Legal aid may be granted to anyone who is financially eligible, in order to cover various legal services involving civil, family, administrative, criminal, mental health, immigration or youth law matters. It is also the agency charged with offering the services provided for in the *Act to promote access to justice in family matters*, namely, the Homologation Assistance Service (HAS) and the Service administratif de rajustement des pensions alimentaires pour enfants (SARPA), a child support recalculation service.

For more information, please visit the website of the Commission des services juridiques at: <http://www.csj.qc.ca>.

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