



With her passion for the visual arts and a tremendous generosity of spirit, Sheila Mackay, as a patron, gave much needed support to the New Brunswick art community and its artists for many, many years. On December 15, 1987 she formalized her passion and generosity by incorporating the Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation. Now, in 2012, with 25 years of service to the New Brunswick community, we are able to celebrate both Sheila Mackay and what she has fostered.

Working with many volunteer advisors, Sheila Mackay shaped a professional organization with a mandate to promote the visual arts in its many forms. Throughout her life, Sheila was generous with artists in need and with struggling organizations and projects. With a lively imagination and to her delight, she helped many of us across the breadth of New Brunswick.

The Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation continues the spirit of support through a volunteer Board of Directors that works with the New Brunswick arts community to proclaim the role of the arts in our civic and personal lives, the valuable role the arts play. For 25 years, the Foundation has been both a supporter and an advocate, and with the guidance of Sheila's foresight the Foundation will continue in those roles.

The most public recognition of the Foundation's support has been with its several awards for excellence, especially the *Strathbutler Award* that acknowledges individual artists and artisans for the distinction of their careers and contributions to the cultural life of the Province and beyond. Twenty-one individuals have been recognized with the biannual *Strathbutler Award* since it was inaugurated in 1991. A second award named for long-time New Brunswick College of Craft and Design weaver Nel Oudemans honours the emerging careers of young New Brunswick artisans. Since its inception in 2002, ten have been recognized with a *Nel Oudemans Award*.

Acknowledging the artists who work in communities across New Brunswick was close to Sheila Mackay's heart and continues with her Foundation. Sheila was also vitally concerned about the opportunities for young people to gain formal education and experience in the visual arts. Acknowledging the career of Saint John native Fred Ross, a scholarship for secondary school graduates entering post-secondary studies was named for him. The *Fred Ross Scholarships* have been awarded to thirteen young artists since 2001, many of whom are beginning to make their marks in the arts communities of Atlantic Canada. The *Sheila Hugh Mackay Scholarship* for graduate studies in the visual arts was initiated in 2008.

With the explosive development of the world wide web, the Foundation has supported organizations to develop visual arts content about New Brunswick that will be

accessible to anyone throughout the world on the internet.

Two notable projects have been the Beaverbrook Art Gallery's *EduKit* (2007) and the Owens Art Gallery's *Studio 360°* (2012). Each project will be available through each gallery's website.

During her life Sheila Mackay supported excellence as she found it in New Brunswick artists and artisans, and she sought to extend the opportunities for education in the visual arts. Sheila's bounteousness also extended to many institutional initiatives, a practice that has been continued by her Foundation.

Over the past 25 years the Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation's Board has provided support for more than 20 important projects. These have included publications like the 1990 New Brunswick Craft Council's *The Landscape of Craft* and research grants for the 2009 *Portraits: New Brunswick Painters* and a 2011 project *The History of Acadian Art* in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Université de Moncton. In 1996 the Foundation sponsored the New Brunswick Museum's Colin B. Mackay Gallery as a showcase for New Brunswick art. A major recent undertaking has been the Foundation's multi-year support of the *Fred Ross 1948 War Memorial Mural Recreation Project* and installation at the University of New Brunswick's Richard J. Currie Center. Between 2006 and 2010 the Foundation supported the *Arts and Heritage Stabilization Program* as a patron and in partnership with the New Brunswick Foundation for the Arts. More prosaically perhaps, but of vital interest for the development of the Saint John Arts Centre's outreach programs, is the Foundation's current support through its new *Special Projects Grants* for a ceramics kiln centre.

The projects have been as varied as Sheila Mackay's own personal vision of the New Brunswick cultural landscape. As an arts advocate the Foundation has undertaken its own initiatives with projects such as the 2010 *Strathbutler Symposium: New Brunswick Visual Arts in Focus* that brought together provincial artists and artisans, arts administrators and educators, arts writers and arts funders for a two day opportunity for discussion and debate, for pondering and celebration. In planning for the next 25 years, the Board of Directors is committed to diligent stewardship of resources.

With her last will and testament Sheila Mackay provided for the ongoing stewardship of her passion and her generosity with an endowment of the Sheila Hugh Mackay Foundation. The Board of Directors shares the delight Sheila took in the arts and especially the New Brunswick arts close to home and to her heart. It endeavours to work actively with the New Brunswick art community to acknowledge its excellence and to address its needs as we strive to realize a compelling cultural life that welcomes and represents us all.