

The gift of knowledge, a guiding star: Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library (PARL) announces our new Indigenous Collection emblem.

(January 29 2018): Next time you visit your library, and browse the shelves – look for a small star along the book or DVD case spine to help you find your way. It is a representation of the Mi'kmaq Eight Pointed Star.

The original artwork and interpretation is by award-winning Mi'kmaq First Nations artist, Gerald Gloade. Each component of the Mi'kmaq Eight Pointed Star image has many layers of symbolic meaning. “The 4 sacred colors and their arrangement, is a much longer story. In summary, White represents the North, the land of ice and snow, where even the animals are white. Yellow represents the East, the land of the rising sun. Mi'kmaq are the ‘People of the Dawn’. Red represents the South, the further you travel in Turtle Island (North America) the warmer it becomes. Finally, Black represents the West, which is where the sun must travel to give us night. The 4 sacred colors also represent the 4 colors of Man, and the 4 stages of development – birth, youth, adulthood and senior,” said Gloade. The star symbol also exemplifies traditional art with the use of Mi'kmaq quillwork within the image's outlines.

The Eight Pointed Star is an adaptation of the original Seven Pointed Start which was the emblem historically used to symbolize the Seven Districts of the Mi'kmaq Nation. The eighth point was added to represent the Crown, after the signing of treaties with Britain.

The library maintains several special collections on topics of cultural importance. “As part of our ongoing library collection development, PARL makes an effort to collect works by Indigenous authors and works with subject matter focusing on Indigenous topics. The library purchases material published in English as well as Indigenous languages. Special emphasis is made to collect works by or about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples in Canada and North America.” said Greg Hayward, Technical Services Librarian.

The library reached out to the Indigenous community for their advice and Mr. Gloade, a well-known and respected researcher, artist and traditional knowledge keeper shared many ideas. “In our research for an identifying image, we discovered several commercially available book collection stickers, but unfortunately the images did not meet with our respectful intent in honouring our First Peoples. We wanted to find an emblem or symbol that was meaningful to our local Indigenous communities.” said Trecia Schell, Community Services Librarian.

And now, with gifts of knowledge shared with our community, there are Mi'kmaq stars to guide your discovery at the library.

For more information about the Indigenous Collection, visit www.parl.ns.ca, stop into your local library or call Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library Headquarters at (902) 755-6031 or toll-free 1 (866) 779-7761.



Photo captions: Gerald Gloade, artist and Program Educator with the Mi'kmahey Debert Cultural Centre (left), Greg Hayward, Technical Services Librarian (centre), and Trecia Schell, Community Services Librarian (right), with Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library.

A stack of books, featuring the spine label

Attachment: Rack card/informational insert

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