

Township of
Langley



Est. 1873

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE November 19, 2019

JOHNSON NAMED FREEWOMAN AT DOUGLAS DAY

A celebration of the people and places that helped shape our community included a special surprise this year, as a rare honour was bestowed on a long-serving Langley resident.

Alice Johnson was presented with Freedom of the Municipality during Douglas Day, held Tuesday, November 19 at Langley Events Centre.

An annual tradition, Douglas Day honours the community's pioneering men and women who are at least 70 years of age and have lived in the Township of Langley or Langley City for at least 60 years. This year's event featured lunch, entertainment, and presentations, and saw a surprised Johnson receive the prestigious status.

"This designation is the highest civic tribute that can be bestowed by the Township of Langley in recognition of an individual's outstanding community contribution," said Township Mayor Jack Froese. "It isn't often that we make someone a Freeman – or Freewoman – of the Municipality, but Alice Johnson is a remarkably dedicated, caring person who has given so much over the decades. She is truly deserving of this honour."

Johnson, who has lived in the Township of Langley her entire life, has committed her efforts and time to celebrating, preserving, and sharing Langley's heritage and history. She has served on the Douglas Day Committee for over a decade, and with the Willoughby Community Hall and the Willoughby School Committees since the 1990s. Johnson was instrumental in preserving both heritage buildings, which remain thriving community centres that are still enjoyed today.

More than 25 years ago, she started the Willoughby Women's Community Institute, to better homes and families in the community and around the world. Johnson has also served with the Township's Heritage Advisory Committee, Langley Heritage Society, and the Langley Centennial Museum History Group, and been Queen Mother on May Day. She has earned the Township of Langley's Eric Flowerdew Volunteer Award and was presented with the Rotary Club of Langley Central's Women of Distinction Award.

“For decades, Alice has quietly and effectively committed herself to this community, making it a better place for those who live here, and ensuring our past remains a vital part of our present and future,” said Froese. “It is a pleasure to give her Freedom of the Municipality.”

Hundreds of residents whose hard work and contributions helped shape the Langley we know today were also recognized at the event. Named after James Douglas, the province’s first governor, Douglas Day is a tradition that has been recognized by the Township since the 1920s and established through a bylaw in 1946. It is held on November 19, on the anniversary of the historic proclamation Douglas made at the Big House in Fort Langley in 1858, which created the Crown Colony of BC.

Presented by the Township of Langley and Langley City, and organized with help from a dedicated committee and volunteers, Douglas Day features a different theme each year. This year, heritage homes were celebrated, and more than 400 pioneers and guests attended.