

MAY 12 2000

Most Reverend Chancellor, it is with our most extreme admiration we present Jeanette Armstrong, poet, writer, teacher, and a force for good in an increasingly murky world.

Perhaps best known in Canada for her novels, such as **Slash** and **Whispering in Shadows**, Jeanette Armstrong's poetry has been published around the world as well as being widely anthologized. Less generally recognized have been her untiring efforts to provide a literary voice to her people, the Okanagan Nation, and to marginalized peoples everywhere, through her work at the EN'OWKIN Centre, its international writing programs, her teaching, and her editorial work for Theytus Publications, the EN'OWKIN Centre's associated publishing house.

For these efforts alone she would stand highly in our regard. But in addition to her literary efforts, she has been steadfast and unconditional in her support for the causes of social justice. Relating the health of all peoples to the health of our planet, Jeanette Armstrong has worked on numerous panels, advisory boards, and think tanks concerned with the quality of the air, the water, and the earth, including the Centre for International Environmental Law, the Brazil Earth Summit/Global Forum, the Convention on Biodiversity and Gene Patenting, and the United Nations Indigenous Peoples Development initiative. In all frankness, her involvement in the cause of protecting our environment is far too extensive to do it justice here. As well, Jeanette Armstrong has been on the front lines of numerous other issues of our day, including women's rights, native rights, and the preservation of what is sacred, spiritual, and traditional for all peoples. Jeanette Armstrong has been appointed an International Witness by the Continental Commission of Indigenous Peoples, to investigate indigenous rights violations in Chiapas. She has been appointed one of seven Indigenous Judges to the First Nations International Court of Justice in Ottawa. And she has been appointed to the British Columbia Legal Services Board of Directors by the Native Community Law Offices. Once again, this listing does insufficient honor to the service she has given to her work in these areas.

But perhaps her greatest contributions have been made where they may never be recognized by Canadian society in general. In a country that, for decades, sought to destroy the cultural and linguistic integrity of the indigenous populations, Jeanette Armstrong not only retained her language and her culture, she has undertaken to take them back to those from whom it was stolen. In a country that now laments that, of the six hundred or more indigenous languages in existence at the time of first European contact only three may survive any length of time into this new century, Jeanette Armstrong has determined that the language of her people, the Okanagan, will not disappear, and that their culture will endure. Those who believe these to be only token efforts, of no enduring loss to humanity should her efforts fail, would be well advised to understand that every aspect of her activism, her respect for life, and her respect for this earth, are extensions of the Okanagan way of life, as embodied in Jeanette Armstrong.

Most Reverend Chancellor, I present to you Jeanette Armstrong and ask that you award her the degree of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa.