

NEWS RELEASE

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***Women who are making a difference
in our society!***

The Women's Y Foundation Announces the Laureates of the 2016 Women of Distinction Awards

Montréal, May 18, 2016. This morning the Montreal Women's Y Foundation announced the names of the laureates for the 23rd edition of the Women of Distinction Awards. These unique awards have been distributed every year since 1994. Inspiring women who have marked our society are recognized in 11 categories, including one for Outstanding Achievement. This year, for the first time, two more awards have been added, the YWCA of Montreal *Coup de Coeur* award and the Inspirational Man award.

What particularly sets these awards apart is the broad array of laureates from diverse spheres of activity. They also have an **added social value** because they recognize the contributions of women who are part of the solution to provide a secure future in which women and girls of Montreal can develop their full potential.

"The Women of Distinction Awards are the only awards that spotlight the achievements and leadership of women in so many sectors of our city. Over the years, 256 inspiring laureates have received these awards; 256 women who have made a difference, and in their own way, have advanced our society. We're very proud to give the award to these women whose paths serve as models for us all," said Sophie Fortin, chair of the board of directors for the Women's Y Foundation.

The Women of Distinction Awards will be presented to the laureates in the following categories at the Théâtre Saint-James in Montréal on September 27, 2016:

- **Arts and Culture: Marcelle Dubois**, Author, Artistic and Executive Director, Jamais Lu and Artistic Co-Director, Théâtre Aux écuries
- **Business and Professions: Kim Thomassin**, National Client Leader, Managing Partner, Québec Region, McCarthy Tétrault
- **Communications: Sue Montgomery**, Journalist
- **Education: Mireille Cyr, Ph.D.**, Professor, Université de Montréal
- **Entrepreneurship: Deborah Cherenfant**, Creator of the blog, *Mots d'Elles*, Founder and Manager of Coloré Design, and designer of Marché Coloré
- **Environment: Pauline D'Amboise**, Secretary General and Vice-President, Governance and Social Responsibility, Mouvement Desjardins
- **Health: Dr. Louise Pilote**, Professor of Medicine and James McGill Chair, McGill University, and Director of the Division of Internal Medicine at McGill University Hospital Centre
- **Science and Technology : Joanna Berzowska**, Associate Professor, Department of Design and Computation Arts, Concordia University, Founder and Research Director, XS Labs, Head of Electronic Textiles, OMsignal
- **Social Commitment: Marie Houzeau**, Executive Director, GRIS-Montréal
- **Sports and Wellness: Manon Simard**, Director, Sport d'excellence, Université de Montréal (Carabins de Montréal)
- **Young Woman of Distinction (tie): Véronique Jacques**, Combat Systems Engineering Officer, Canadian Armed Forces, and **Kharoll-Ann Souffrant**, Student in the bachelor's program of social work, McGill University

Three special awards were also presented earlier today. The **Outstanding Achievement Award** went to Louise Champoux-Paillé, Certified Corporate Administrator, and the **Coup de coeur – YWCA Montréal Award** was presented to Carmen Daviault, Françoise Dupont and Marielle Ricard, for their remarkable friendship and exceptional solidarity, which developed during their stay at the YWCA Montréal and continues today! And, for the first time, an **Inspirational Man Award** was instituted this year and awarded to artist and rapper, **Koriass**, for his social engagement and public affirmation of feminism.

This year, each laureate will volunteer her time, talent, and particular expertise by becoming the honorary sponsor of one of our programs or services. In this way, each woman will symbolize success and perseverance in a particular domain.

“Employability, secure housing, community services, and youth, are now, and will continue to be the four pillars of our action and the foundation of our expertise. Since 1875, YWCA Montréal has assisted over 350,000 women and girls as they make positive and long-lasting changes in their own lives and in society,” added Hélène Lépine, executive director of YWCA Montreal and its Foundation.

Thanks to our **partners and donors**, who through their financial support have made this major event possible, and, above all, enable thousands of women and girls to build a better future: [BMO Financial Group](#), [National Bank of Canada](#), [Scotiabank](#), [TD Canada Trust](#), [Bell Canada](#), [McKesson Canada](#) and [Mouvement Desjardins](#).

The Women of Distinction Award recognizes the role of women in the advancement of society (innovation, discovery, inspiration), by shining a light on women who, through their achievements in their respective fields, have brought positive and lasting changes on society, and by raising funds for the YWCA Montreal whose mission is to build a better future for women and girls.

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Source, Information and interviews: Ève Cardinal, project manager, Women’s Y Foundation,
514-866-9941, ext. 239
ecardinal@ydesfemmesmtl.org