

## HONORARY DEGREE

### *Citation*



*Thomas Vernon Hill*

### *Thomas Vernon Hill*

Tom's interest in a museum career was stimulated by a year's secondment to the Royal Ontario Museum during his tenure with Indian and Northern Affairs. In 1982, Tom became Museum Director of the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario. The Woodland Cultural Centre was founded in 1972 on the site of the Mohawk Institute, a former residential school. Under his directorship, the Centre has achieved international repute as a unique place for the culturally sensitive study and exhibition of First Nations art, archaeology, history and science, as a venue for First Nations performance art and as a research institute for First Nations history, art and language. Tom has directed many important exhibits at the museum, including *Mohawk Ideals*, *Victorian Values: Oronhyatekha, M.D.*, *Fluffs and Feathers*, and *Skywalkers*. The Centre regularly hosts live television broadcasts, such as "Buffalo Tracks" and shows for regional and national news networks. Tom has also encouraged the use of the Centre for conferences and speakers on indigenous issues of global significance.

His international recognition as an authority on First Nations artifacts and art and the appropriate display of them in a museum setting is attested to by constant requests to share his knowledge and wisdom at international academic conferences. His most recent papers have been delivered at learned conferences in Taiwan, England and Greece. He has published several museum catalogues for the Woodland Cultural Centre and Smithsonian Institution. Tom was one of the chairs and principal authors of the 1992 Task Force on Museums and First Peoples, a document that redefined the relationship between museums and First Nations in Canada. In addition, he serves on a number of cultural organizations and museum associations as a board chair or member. Tom is also a recognized artist and stage performer.

In honour of his accomplishments in the promotion of First Nations art and culture, Tom has received numerous awards, including the Order of Ontario in 1993 and Honorary Fellowships from the Canadian Museum Association and Ontario College of Art in 1997 and 1998, respectively.

Tom Hill is being honoured today for his lifelong achievements as an artist, a museum director, an educator, a filmmaker, a researcher, and as a person who has actively promoted the cultural revival of First Nations communities and who has shared, in Tom's words, "the richness, depth, adaptability and aesthetic beauty of First Nations culture" with the rest of the world.

*Tom Hill is Konadaha Seneca, Six Nations Confederacy. He was born in Ohsweken, located in the heart of the Six Nations community, and he attended high school at Brantford Collegiate Institute. He studied at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, graduating in 1967. He was awarded a curatorial scholarship with the National Gallery of Canada and worked in its research office. This work led to a position as the Director of Cultural Development, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in Ottawa.*