

# Six Nations remembers missing and murdered women

By Donna Duric  
Writer

Their memories will never be forgotten. Numerous events and vigils marking the lives of missing and murdered indigenous

The Six Nations Men's Fire held a weekend-long shut-down of Hwy. 6 between Fourth Line and Sixth Line to draw attention to the issue, handing out leaflets with information to over

women take place," said Men's Fire member Lester Green. The Native Women's Association of Canada has estimated about 1,200 aboriginal women have



Six Nations held its first Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women event Sunday at Veteran's Park. About 50 people turned out to remember including former NWAC president Bev Jacobs (second from right) who began the fight to draw attention to the numbers of MMIW during her term as president. (Photo by Jim C Powless)

women were held around the area over the weekend with Six Nations people echoing calls across the country for a national inquiry into missing and murdered women.

1,000 motorists who passed by their blockade at Hwy. 6 and Fourth Line Road. "We're demanding that an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous

women were held around the area over the weekend with Six Nations people echoing calls across the country for a national inquiry into missing and murdered women. gone missing or been murdered since the 1960s with complaints their cases are not thoroughly investigated by police. Green says indigenous women deserve the same



Signs flags posted in Hamilton over the weekend and the Red Dress campaign (below) arrived at McMaster University with the pictures of some of the MMIW were hung (Photos by Eulene Victoria Bomberry)



amount of attention and news coverage as non-indigenous women when they go missing. "That's what we want for our people, as well," said Green. "We hold our women very close to our hearts. They're very dear to us. When you have a num-



Six Nations Men's Fire members including Lester Green (left) and Bill Monture (far right) blocked Highway 6 at Fourth Line over the weekend to draw attention to the plight of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. (Photo by Donna Duric)

ber that's that high, something needs to get fixed and something needs to change."

He said an inquiry or panel looking into the issue should be composed of both Canadian officials and indigenous leaders, as well.

Bev Jacobs, former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, spent over a decade looking into the issue.

She bluntly told reporters at the Hwy. 6 blockade Saturday, "I'm angry. I'm pissed off that we have to keep doing this to bring attention, so that people understand, so that people care. That's what I want. I want people to care. I want them to care about what's happening to our women."

She said the history of colonization has played a role in the elevated numbers of missing and murdered indigenous women.

"There's a whole history of colonization that has an impact specifically on indigenous women," said Jacobs. "There was a whole process to try to erase us as a people. When you attack women, you attack our nationhood. You can't just blame one specific thing. Systemically, I blame Canada for this because of their policies."

She also places some blame on society as a whole for its "racism" and "lack of under-



The Mississauga of New Credit held a march and vigil in Hagersville Friday to draw attention to MMIW. (Photo by Donna Duric)

standing of our history and who we are." She called Harper "a liar" for his assertion that MMIW is not a sociological phenomenon.

She has personally met Harper during her work as president of NWAC. She said she didn't feel good in his presence.

"I wasn't comfortable even standing beside him," said Jacobs. "I don't trust him. I don't trust a word he says. I don't think he has an understanding of the history of our people. I don't think he wants to; I don't think he cares to."

She said vigils and rallies for missing and murdered women won't end. She wants to see a Royal Commission struck to look into the issue.

"We're going to have to keep on doing things like this for society for the pub-

lic to understand," said Jacobs.

For the first time, a vigil was also held on Six Nations at Veterans Park on Sunday evening, organized by community members Jen Mt. Pleasant and Aileen Joseph. Joseph's daughter Shelley was murdered in 2004 in Hamilton.

It was a sombre event, as community members walked around the park holding candles and signs, while a local singer sang Amazing Grace.

Community members who've lost loved ones to violence spoke out about the issue, with elected Chief Ava Hill saying an inquiry led by aboriginal people is needed and in the works.

A number of people in Hamilton shut down portions of Main Street to bring attention to the issue, as well.