

# No glass ceiling in native Canada, female chief says

Sharon Stinson Henry  
women's day speaker  
at Stouffville event

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The non-native world should take a lesson from Canada's First Nation people and hold women in higher regard than they currently do, according to Chippewas of Rama First Nation Chief Sharon Stinson Henry.

"Externally, and in the commercial world, there is a glass ceiling," Ms Stinson Henry, who is serving her fifth term as chief, said. "Certainly, the non-native community could look at the native community and learn."

Ms Stinson Henry was the guest speaker at this year's Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce International Women's Day luncheon earlier this month.

There are currently 633 First Nation communities across Canada and 104 of them are led by female chiefs.

Ms Stinson Henry comes from a long line of chiefs that include her great-great grandfather and brother, who held that position for 26 years.

"It's in the blood," she said. "I've always had an interest in politics."

However, that interest did not

necessarily include being chief.

In the early 1990s, Ms Stinson Henry took her political interests to Ottawa where she was an executive assistant to Simcoe North Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament Doug Lewis.

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That experience, along with an extensive amount of volunteering within her First Nation community, got people asking her to run for chief.

"I think that the fact I had the experience in my life off reserve contributed (to) my people recognizing I had something to bring to the table," she said.

Her election platform has always been about accountability and transparency.

Ms Stinson Henry is currently part-way through her fifth term, which started in September and she has no idea if she will seek re-election.

"I just take it a term at a time," she said.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Chippewas of Rama First Nation chief Sharon Stinson Henry chats with Mariel Camilleri Saringer (left) of Mysthaven Country Retreat and Spa and Helene Johnson (right) at the Stouffville Chamber of Commerce International Women's Day Luncheon at Sleepy Hollow Golf and Country Club.

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## Chamber director's funeral packs church

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Peter Taws loved life and never had a negative thing to say about anyone or anything.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville resident died suddenly on Feb. 28, at the age of 55, while on vacation in Florida.

"He just really loved life; he was just a really happy person," said Janet Davies, who served with Mr. Taws on the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce board of directors. "He was just one of the nicest guys I knew."

Case in point, every year on Valentine's Day, Mr. Taws brought the women in the chamber office roses.

"He just made everyone feel special," she said.

Mr. Taws was a chamber director since 1996 and assisted many members with their insurance plans.

Wednesday morning's memorial service included teenagers to the elderly, who poured out onto the street because the church was too small.

"He was absolutely the nicest man," Ms Davies said.

Mr. Taws was the husband of wife Barbara and loving father of Ashley (Derek) and Doug. He is also survived by brothers Andrew, Charles, Gordon and sister Lori.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

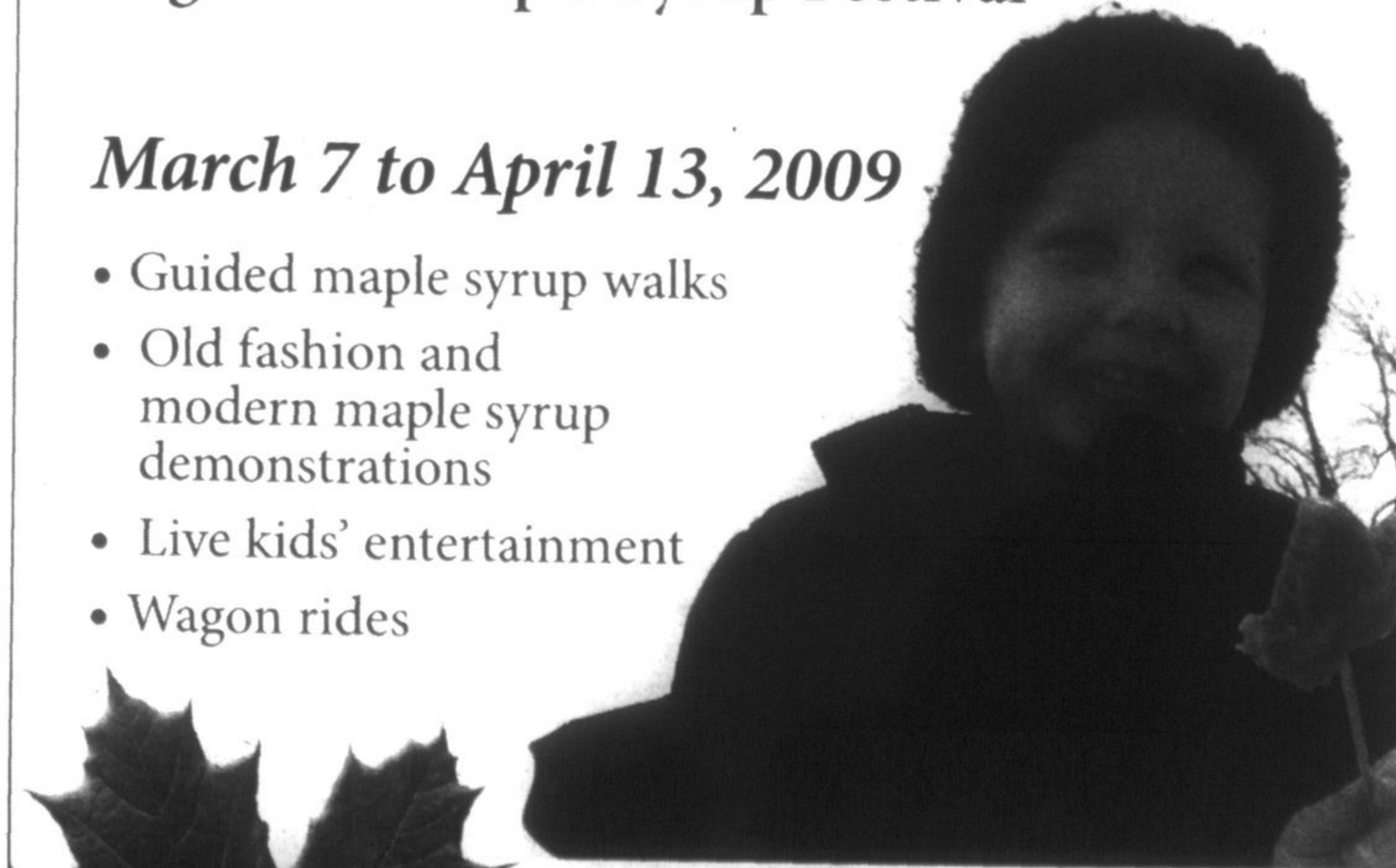
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