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SCO APPLAUDS APPOINTMENT OF MARY SIMON AS GOVERNOR GENERAL

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ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB — The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is pleased to learn that Mary Simon will be Canada's next Governor General.

"This is truly a historic day, especially given the heightened discussion around working towards meaningful reconciliation between colonial governments and first peoples," said SCO Grand Chief Jerry Daniels. "I want to commend Prime Minister Trudeau for having the foresight to appoint this country's first ever Indigenous Governor General, especially one with the credentials of Ms. Simon."

Mary Simon is Inuk from Kuujuaq in what is now known as Quebec.

She was instrumental in negotiating the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975. That deal is often referred to as the first "modern treaty" in Canada. In 1986, Ms. Simon led the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), which represents Inuit people in all the Arctic countries. In that role, she championed two priorities for Indigenous Peoples of the north: protecting their way of life from environmental damage and pushing for responsible economic development on their traditional territory. Ms. Simon was also named as Canada's 1st Arctic Ambassador by Prime Minister Jean Chretien in 2002. She was made an Officer of the Order of Canada as well as a recipient of the Governor General's Northern Award.

Almost all of Mary Simon's professional career has been dedicated to advocating for Indigenous rights.

"In what is amounting to be a very difficult year for First Nation people given the discovery of unmarked graves at former residential school sites, this announcement comes as very welcome news," added Grand Chief Daniels. "While the role of Governor General is mostly ceremonial in nature, it's not lost on us, that having an Indigenous person at Rideau Hall, marks another major step forward in the repairing our battered relationships with the Crown and its' governments."

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The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 First Nations and more than 80,000 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process.

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