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PAUKTUUTIT
INUIT WOMEN OF CANADA

MEDIA ADVISORY

2005 WOMAN OF THE YEAR

January 9, 2006

Immediate - Ottawa – Martha Greig, newly elected President of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, today announced that **Sheila Watt Cloutier** is the winner of Pauktuutit's annual Woman of the Year Award.

Each year Pauktuutit honours a very special woman in recognition of her contribution to her community, to the Arctic, to Canada and the world.

Sheila Watt Cloutier, Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, works to draw attention to the problems of global warming and its particular impact on the Arctic - traveling, speaking and advocating tirelessly. Here at home she is committed to helping Canadians understand and appreciate the central place of the Arctic in our national consciousness.

When informed about the award, Ms. Cloutier responded, "*I am honored to be named Woman of the Year by Pauktuutit, a remarkable Inuit Women's organization that has led the much needed courageous work of addressing the issues of well being for our communities. I repeat here what I have stated to my fellow Inuit leaders previously; the global recognition and awards I have received this past year would have much less meaning for me if they do not resonate with my own leaders and communities. I am truly touched by this gesture from my fellow Inuit women leaders.*"

2005 was a year of particular achievement for Sheila. She received the first ever Northern Medal from Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada. In addition, Ms. Cloutier's contributions to Inuit and northern Indigenous Peoples earned her the 2005 United Nations Champion of the Earth Award. And she won the 2005 Sophie Prize from the Oslo-based Sophie Foundation, established to inspire people working towards a sustainable future.

Sheila's passion and dedication puts a human face on the challenges that the Arctic and Inuit confront every day and brings a human rights perspective to the destruction of the

environment. One of her favourite quotes is by American poet Louise Bogan, whose words encourage her in her work:

“In a time lacking in truth and certainty and filled with anguish and despair, no woman should be shamefaced in attempting to give back to the world through her work, a portion of its lost heart”

On Martha's Election, Sheila commented, *“I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Martha Greig on her win as President of Pauktuutit. I have a wonderful community and childhood history with Martha and am convinced that Pauktuutit and the compelling issues faced by our communities are in very good hands with the strength and commitment that Martha will bring to this leadership role.”*

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