

In Memoriam

**Dr. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis
(1939-2007)**



Photo: Aboriginal Healing Foundation

This issue of the *Journal of Aboriginal Health* is dedicated to the life of Dr. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis. A Chippewa raised on the Lac du Flambeau reservation in Wisconsin, Valaskakis served on the editorial advisory board for the first three volumes of the *Journal of Aboriginal Health*.

Valaskakis was the Director of Research at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation in Ottawa and was Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Concordia University in Montreal, where she served as Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science; Vice-Dean, Academic Planning; Chair of the Department of Communication Studies; and Director of the M.A. Program in Media Studies. She also served as Trustee Principal of the Simone de Beauvoir (Women's Studies) Institute and Co-ordinator of the Program in Canadian Studies.

Valaskakis researched the social and cultural change of Aboriginal people for three decades. Her writing on the development and impact of northern and Native communications, and on issues of Aboriginal cultural studies, has been widely published. In 2005, she published a book of essays entitled *Indian Country: Essays on Contemporary Native Culture* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press). She was a past-president of the Canadian Communication Association and the Quebec Writer's Federation.

Valaskakis served as Co-Chair of the Aboriginal Scholars Project, sponsored by the Policy Research Initiative of the Privy Council Office. She was Co-Director of the Aboriginal Mental Health Network, sat on the advisory board of the CIHR Institute of Aboriginal Peoples Health, served on the editorial boards of *Cultural Studies* and the *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, and was a co-applicant of two CIHR grants.

Valaskakis was a founding member of the boards of Waseskun Healing Lodge, the Montreal Native Friendship Centre (on which she served as Secretary and President), the Native North American Studies Institute and Manitou Community College. She served on the board of the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations and the advisory boards of the National Film Board's Studio D (New Initiatives in Film Program for Women of Colour and Women of the First Nations) and Studio One (the First Nations Studio).

In 2002, she received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for her contributions to Aboriginal media and communications. In 2005, she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Ottawa. (*Biography courtesy of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.*)

