

### Norval Morrisseau Heritage Society

In 2005, the Norval Morrisseau Heritage Society (NMHS) was established at the request of the artist, to preserve his legacy and to increase knowledge of his work for the benefit of future generations. To achieve its mission, the Society is creating a catalogue raisonnée, a comprehensive research database which will document the artist's works. The Society's six volunteer members are all established professionals with scholarly expertise and familiarity with the works of Norval Morrisseau and Aboriginal art in general. Such a project is undertaken only for artists of exceptional caliber and significance, such as Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and David Milne. The Norval Morrisseau catalogue raisonnée will be the first ever completed for an Aboriginal artist in Canada.



Dr. Ruth Phillips  
Member of the  
Norval Morrisseau  
Heritage Society

The Woodland Arts Festival Committee is thrilled to announce that NMHS Society member Dr. Ruth Phillips has accepted our invitation to attend the festival. Dr. Phillips is a Professor of Art History at Carleton University in Ottawa and has studied and written about Native North American art for twenty-five years. She is the author of articles and essays on Morrisseau and other Anishinaabe painters. Dr. Phillips will be accompanied by Dr. Trudy Nicks, Senior Curator of Ethno history for North America, Royal Ontario Museum.

Dr. Phillips will use the opportunity to photograph and document artworks that were done locally, and to gather information about the artist's Red Lake years. "We will not be authenticating paintings", says Dr. Phillips, "we do not yet have the scholarly basis for doing so, and that is what the catalogue is intended to provide". Dr. Phillips explained that there are two benefits for collectors to have their works included in the *catalogue raisonnée*. "First, a 'public interest' factor, as helping us to create the *catalogue raisonnée* will make it possible for Morrisseau's work and great influence to be appreciated and assessed based on accurate information. Secondly, once the catalogue is complete, those works included in it will have been accepted as authentic by a group of recognized experts. When and if owners or collectors wish to donate their works to a museum or sell them, inclusion in the catalogue will be a benefit in setting appropriate prices and tax receipts".

Regarding privacy and security, Dr. Phillips explained that the data base is not public. "It is currently housed on a server in a university research unit and protected with state of the art computer security. When we are ready to publish the catalogue we will check to see if owners want to remain anonymous or have their art listed only as "Private Collection."

Dr. Phillips will be meeting with local Morrisseau collectors on Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, by appointment, in the Heritage Centre board room. People can either bring in their paintings or pictures of the works in their collections.

Dr. Phillips added that any documentation owners may have, such as receipts and letters would be most useful. "If these are lacking, we will make careful records of oral accounts of how the works were acquired as well as of any memories Red Lake residents have of Norval Morrisseau".

Anyone interested in making an appointment to meet with Dr. Phillips, or learning more about the Norval Morrisseau Heritage Society and the *catalogue raisonnée*, is asked to contact Michèle Alderton, Director / Curator at the Heritage Centre at 727-3006.