



## PRESS RELEASE

### THE CHRISTENSEN FUND RECEIVES THE 2007 IFIP AWARD

AKWESASNE, NY, JULY 16, 2007 – International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) presented its third annual IFIP Award to The Christensen Fund in recognition of their efforts to promote and preserve Indigenous stewardships of cultural and ecological heritages. The presentation was made during an evening celebration at the Le Meridien Hotel on May 7<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with IFIP's sixth Linking Circles annual conference at the Levi Strauss Foundation in San Francisco, California.

The Christensen Fund Chairperson Diane Christensen and Executive Director Ken Wilson were both on hand to receive the award before a gathering of over 150 donors and Indigenous representatives from around the world. Heartfelt words were shared by both Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and Girma Zenbe, Director of the Culture and Arts Society of Ethiopia during the presentation of the beautiful soapstone sculpture called *Weaving a New Path for the Future*.

"On behalf of all us at The Christensen Fund I would like to thank the IFIP selection committee for their recognition of the value of efforts to get resources into the hands of traditional stewards of the biological and cultural heritage of this planet," remarked Wilson in receiving the award. He added, "whilst it endures and so that future generations will similarly encounter a rich, varied and beautiful world - in support of all the vision and energy that exists among Indigenous People to solve their problems and sustain diversity."

The IFIP Award is bestowed upon a foundation or individual that has demonstrated efforts to increase philanthropic support for Indigenous Peoples around the world. The award is presented to individuals who are donors themselves, working in an IFIP member institutions, or an International grantmaking organization. The first recipient of the award was Susan Berresford, President of the Ford Foundation, for her leadership in increasing a greater commitment from a philanthropic institution for international Indigenous sustainable projects and communities. The Kalliopeia Foundation was named last year's recipient of the award.

The award presentation took place on the first day of the event-filled conference that featured keynote addresses from Indigenous Parliament of America President Isabel Ortega Ventura, Levi Strauss Company Chairman Bob Hass, and Peruvian actress Q'Orianka Kilcher. The two-day gathering also included three identified tracks with twelve sessions that offered funders and Indigenous panelists with opportunities to share experiences.

The theme for the sixth annual conference, “Weaving a New Path in Philanthropy,” was chosen to symbolize the interrelatedness of funder’s work and how we must all work together to achieve our goals. The act of weaving represents strands that cross over and under each other, it not only produces beautiful, well-woven textiles, but in some Indigenous communities, the patterns mirror the social and economic history of the community and the weaver’s life experiences.

In receiving the award, Diane Christensen remarked to the audience that, “We are really honored, but I’d like to say that what we are celebrating is what all of you are doing.” Christensen noted, “In a way, this award is for all of us.”

The conference was sponsored by Levi Strauss Foundation, The Christensen Fund, Kalliopeia Foundation, Livingry Fund, Tides Foundation, Ford Foundation, Mitsubishi International Corporation Foundation, SEEDS, McLean Budden, AVEDA, Essential Informations, Garfield Foundation, Global Fund for Women, Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and The Mailman Foundation.

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