**Don Peuramaki: 1948-2019**

On May 15th2019 the community has lost another highly significant and influential giant.

Don Peuramaki had extensive experience in media: television, radio, video production, visual art and music. He was senior and executive producer for the award-winning weekly co-production, Disability Network (D-Net) for eight seasons at CBC Television. The series incorporated both documentary and magazine formats. Don also produced a two-hour special for CBC sports on the Atlanta Paralympic Games which drew an audience of over 1.5 million viewers.

Awards for D-Net included: ACTRA’s “Into the Mainstream” Award, B’nai Brith’s Media Human Rights Award, International Film and TV Festival of New York Awards, and Columbus International Film and Video Festival Awards.

D-Net productions of over 200 broadcasts focused on many themes as they relate to people with disabilities, such as: access, attitudes, barrier-free design, success stories, legislation, inclusion, sports, transportation, accommodation, media, housing and the arts (D-Net broadcast the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act on the White House lawn). Similar themes were addressed during a weekly radio program, The Radio Connection, which Don produced during the eighties.

Don served on the advisory board for the “Projections” International Film Festival which featured films produced, written or directed by people with disabilities, and was a past Vice Chair of the Board of the “Abilities Arts Festival” which showcases the work of people with disabilities in the arts. He has acted in a variety of capacities for the Innoversity Creative Summit including advisory, committee member, research and production.

During his life, he made significant contributions to redesigning participation and portrayals of people with disabilities in the industry due to his involvement in the generation of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) “Report on the Participation, Presence and Portrayal of People with Disabilities on Canadian Television,” published in 2005.

In 1999 along with George Farrell and Bill McQueen, he formed Fireweed Media Productions Inc. Sadly, Bill, who was a close friend of Don, has also passed on.

Don always encouraged and “proactively” pursued “inclusion” and “diversity” through Fireweed productions, as well as in other community-based activities within the film, media, broadcast and arts industries. He believed that broad social and citizen participation of persons with disabilities is essential to ensure full inclusion of persons with disabilities in Canada.

All his professional life Don worked brilliantly to bring new people with disabilities to tell stories in front of the cameras and behind them. Through D-Net and other media initiatives Don provided training and work experience to over fifty people, most of whom continue to work in the industry. At the end of his life he was working with CILT to give opportunities for work in the new media to the next generation of talented people with disabilities.

On a personal note, Don was a gentle soul who had a wicked sense of humor, loved nature, and steadfastly defended his beliefs, his friends and many social justice issues. He will be warmly remembered by many.

He leaves a legacy of D-Net Programs which have been initially installed on CILT’s Youtube channel and can be accessed through the CILT website: [www.cilt.ca](http://www.cilt.ca)