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**Rick Mercer, Madeleine Redfern and NHLer Grant Clitsome join a jury of prominent Canadians to champion Everyday Political Citizens.**

***The complete jury for 2014 can be found on the following page***

Toronto, September 8<sup>th</sup> 2014—With Canadians in four provinces preparing to vote in this fall's municipal elections, **Samara** launches the second annual **Everyday Political Citizen** project, which shows that candidates are not the only Canadians committed to democratic vibrancy in their communities.

"Today we are thrilled to announce the extraordinary Canadians who will select this year's top Everyday Political Citizens," says Samara co-founder and co-author of bestseller *Tragedy in the Commons* Michael MacMillan. "Everyday Political Citizens are the lifeblood of our democracy and too often go unrecognized."

With voter turnout on a steady decline and Canadians' **satisfaction with democracy at an all-time low**, Everyday Political Citizens are more necessary than ever—campaigners, community organizers, and members of local riding associations prove that politics can be done in a positive way with the hope of changing policies to build a better country.

"It's easy to feel disengaged from the political system. We each have our own list of challenges and politics rarely makes the top of it," says juror Gabrielle Scrimshaw. "But across Canada there are everyday political heroes who remind us that there are more ways to get involved, and that our participation makes a tangible difference. They're making politics more accessible and in doing so, breaking down the old stereotype that politics is just for the select few."

In its first year, the EPCitizen contest brought in 231 nominations from coast to coast to coast, and nominees were recognized by Members of Parliament, media and community leaders. Nominations for this cross-country competition can come from anyone.

It only takes a few minutes to give a colleague or friend the recognition they deserve. Even before announcing the jury, over 60 nominations have already been submitted. To see which ridings have already been represented, check this **interactive map**.

**With nominations flowing in from across the country, Samara staff can highlight individuals from your city, province or territory for you. And in many circumstances we can connect you with nominees from your area to learn why and how they contribute to politics.**

## Announcing the jurors for Everyday Political Citizen of 2014

In December 2014, the following Canadians, who are dedicated to improving politics and civic engagement in this country, will come together to review Canada's top political citizens and ultimately **award the best Everyday Political Citizen of 2014**:

- **Remzi Cej**, Chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission
- **Ali Chatur**, Everyday Political Citizen youth winner 2013
- **Grant Clitsome**, defenceman for the Winnipeg Jets and democracy advocate
- **Nancy Close**, Community Relations Coordinator in Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi's office
- **Mark Coffin**, Everyday Political Citizen winner 2013 and Founder of Springtide Collective
- **George Cooper**, President of University of King's College and Former MP for Halifax
- **Kirstan Gagnon**, Manager of Stakeholder Engagement at Elections Canada
- **Taylor Gunn**, President and CEO of CIVIX and co-founder of Student Vote
- **Carol Anne Lee**, CEO of Linacare and Chair of the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation
- **Tom Long**, Leader in executive search and expert on global CEO and board practice
- **Hugh MacKinnon**, Chairman and CEO of the law firm Bennett Jones
- **Rick Mercer**, Canadian comedian, television personality and political satirist
- **Madeleine Redfern**, Former Mayor of Iqaluit and President of Ajungi Consulting Group
- **Denise Siele**, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Operations at Equal Voice
- **Gabrielle Scrimshaw**, award-winning young Indigenous professional with a passion for social impact

"I've ranted a lot about youth voter turnout and garnered some attention just because I lead a public life. There are so many people who keep our democracy moving in private and never get recognized. How and why someone gets involved shouldn't be a state secret—it should be a state celebration."—Rick Mercer, juror

All nominations can be seen on this interactive map of the country:  
<http://www.samaracanada.com/fun-stuff/everyday-political-citizen-map>

**The contest closes OCTOBER 31<sup>ST</sup>.**

### Media requests

If you would like more information about the Everyday Political Citizen project, please contact Jennifer Phillips at 416.960.7927 or [Jennifer.phillips@samaracanada.com](mailto:Jennifer.phillips@samaracanada.com). As well, you can search on <http://everydaypoliticalcitizen.com/> to find nominees from your province, riding or city.

## About Samara

Samara is a charity dedicated to improving political participation in Canada. Through research and educational programs, Samara reconnects citizens to politics. Samara is funded by charitable donations from foundations and individuals from across the country.

**We are always available to comment on our areas of research, which include citizen participation and voting behaviour, political leadership and Members of Parliament, and political parties.** Our research and programming can be found at [www.samaracanada.com](http://www.samaracanada.com), or via Twitter [@SamaraCda](https://twitter.com/SamaraCda).

Co-founders of Samara Alison Loat and Michael MacMillan recently published the bestselling book *Tragedy in the Commons, Former Members of Parliament Speak Out About Canada's Failing Democracy*.

**Generous support for the Everyday Political Citizen project is provided by national law firm Bennett Jones.**

“Bennett Jones is delighted to help Samara Canada honour citizen engagement at the local level, and I’m personally delighted to serve as a juror again this year. Canada’s political volunteers, policy analysts, idea generators and advocates are catalysts for renewal and form an integral part of civil society. They are essential to the animation of our political process and constitute the glue that keeps the system together. Samara’s identification and celebration of our Everyday Political Citizens is a terrific initiative.”

—Hugh MacKinnon, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Bennett Jones