

Local arts patrons honoured

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Fort St. John

A pair of North Peace patrons of the arts were honoured this past week.

Bob Bennetts and Sue Popesku were among 49 British Columbians honoured by Lt. Gov. Gardo Gardom at his home in Victoria Nov. 4.

Popesku, a resident of Fort St. John since 1974, was recognized for her contributions to arts and culture and, particularly, her fundraising efforts for the North Peace Cultural Centre.

"Culture and heritage are very important elements of the community," said Popesku, who was also a contributor to the building of the Fort St. John museum.

"Arts and culture are there to

help young people become more confident."

In 1975 Popesku, then a teacher at NPSS, produced "Oklahoma!", the first Broadway musical production in the region.

Since then she has been involved with numerous cultural and artistic activities, including community theatre, community singers, and the Fort St. John Arts Council.

She also helped to develop Artspace and the former and current cultural centres.

Arts in the community are meant for all young people, she said, and it is the option of some



Sue Popesku in one of her many community roles.

youths to take their art to whatever level they choose.

"The arts in the community are not here to make prima-ballerinas and Oscar-winning actors," Popesku said.

Those achievements, while nice, are up to the individual artists, she said.

Bennetts, who was recognized for

his contribution to building the arts and education program in the Peace River region, was unavailable for comment but will be the subject of an upcoming *Alaska Highway News* article.