

Clarence Monette receives John Perona award

About the John Perona Copper Country Traditions Award

Giovanni Batista Perona, a.k.a. Johnnie Perona, was born in 1920 near Calumet on the farm owned by his Italian immigrant parents. Johnnie was born into a musical family, and Calumet in those days was an ethnic and musical melting pot. John learned to play French-Canadian reels, Slovenian polkas, Croatian waltzes, and Finnish schottisches. He became a proficient player of the fiddle, the Polish concertina, and the rhythm bones.

It was his bones playing that was largely responsible for his being designated a Master Folk Musician by the Michigan Traditional Arts Program. As a Master Folk Artist, John taught bones-playing to two apprentices and dozens of workshop participants and was honored with awards at the American Rhythm Bones Festival.

John passed away in February of 2009, and it was with much sadness that our Copper Country community said good-

bye to a great man and legendary talent. For an individual who so celebrated life and music, we honor John's memory with this award.

2010 Recipient — Dave Walli

2009 Recipient — Nancy McCabe

2008 Recipient — Tom and Jan Manniko

2007 Recipient — Judy Jarvela

2006 Recipient — John Perona

About this year's recipient:
Clarence Monette

Clarence Monette was born on Jan. 13, 1935, in Lake Linden. After graduating from Lake Linden-Hubbell High School in 1953, Clarence enlisted in the United States Army and was stationed in Germany where he served as an administrator, field artillery man, and specialist in medical and operating room procedures. In 1956, he returned to civilian life to attend Suomi College (now Finlandia University) in Hancock. Later in 1956, Monette returned to the military, taking employment with the Army ROTC Department at Michigan

Technological University. Before his retirement on April 29, 1988, he served as an instructor, finance officer, manager, medic and also attended classes as a student. Monette retired from the U.S. Army Reserves as a Sergeant First Class (E-7) in 1995.

Clarence has been active with many local and regional organizations. He has worked with a number of youth organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America (he served as area scoutmaster), the Adventure 4-H Club, the Houghton County 4-H Council, and the Keweenaw County 4-H Council. More significantly, Clarence has been actively involved in a number of local historical societies and heritage organizations. He was a founding member of the Copper Country Heritage Council and the Keweenaw County Historical Society and has served as an executive board member for the Copper Range Historical Society, the U.P. Fire Fighters Memorial Museum, the Norwegian Lutheran Church Historical Society,

and the Keweenaw County Historical Society. Clarence also served as editor for The Superior Signal, the newsletter of the Keweenaw County Historical Society and The Champion Line, the newsletter of the Copper Range Historical Society.

Clarence is the author of more than 50 small volumes about the Copper Country. Clarence's first work, Cor-Ago: a Lake Linden Medicine Company, began as a term paper for a local history class he attended at Michigan Tech. Through his dedication to research and writing, his name has become synonymous with local history in the Copper Country.

In 2008, Clarence donated his personal research collection to the Michigan Tech Archives. It was carefully processed by long-time Archives student worker Ryan Cooper, and described in detail by University Archivist Erik Nordberg. Through these years of work and his generous gift, Clarence Monette has ensured a treasure-trove of regional history will be preserved.