

Leah LaPlante (née Racine).

Leah LaPlante is a highly respected Metis politician from southwest Manitoba. She was born and raised in the Lake Metigoshe-Turtle Mountain area of Southern Manitoba. She became involved in the politics of the Manitoba Metis Federation in the 1980's and became the Local Chairperson. She has spent many years researching and studying Metis history. In 1997 she was elected as Vice-President of the Southwest Region of the MMF and moved to Brandon. She is presently in her fifth term and is still committed to the Metis people she represents. She has held many Provincial Portfolios over the years but has been the Minister of Education for the MMF and the Chair of the Louis Riel Institute since 2003. She sits on other Boards and committees related to the MMF as well as many in the larger community as she believes in being involved in making positive change as well as using every opportunity to learn something new and to always have a Metis voice at the table.

She has a passion for preserving and promoting Metis culture and heritage. In 2007, Leah LaPlante was Co-chair of the Canadian Conservation Institute *Preserving Aboriginal Heritage: Technical and Traditional Approaches Symposium*. In September 2007, about 400 people gathered in Ottawa for Symposium 2007 – Professional conservators and Elders, staff from cultural centres and museum managers, community leaders and students, curators and historians, and international experts from North and South America, Australia, Europe, and Africa came to share their expertise, experiences, stories, and commitment. About one-third of them were Indigenous peoples, mainly from Canada (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit).



Leah has served in the following positions:

- Vice President, MMF Southwest Region
- Minister of Education, MMF
- Chair of the Board of the Louis Riel Institute
- Board of Louis Riel Capital Corporation

- Board of Governors, Metis National Council
- University of Winnipeg Indigenous Advisory Circle
- Brandon University P.E.N.T. (Program for the Education of Native Teachers) Advisory Committee
- Brandon University Foundation Board

Leah will receive the *Ka Ni Kanichihk* Keeping the Fires Burning Award on June 14, 2012. This award honours *Okijida Ikwe* or “Big Hearted Women.” Big Hearted Women exemplify the seven sacred laws of honesty, courage, respect, humility, sharing, caring and love by sharing their knowledge, talents and experience to help keep their families and communities strong.

Leah is a great-granddaughter of Louis Lee Racine and Selina Moren. Louis Lee Racine, the fourth of the early Métis settlers in the Turtle Mountains, was born in Montreal in 1852. He lived there for only a few years before his family moved west. He met his wife, Selina Moren, in Beauford, North Dakota. They married in the late 1890s and had two children, Louis Jr. and Elizabeth, before moving to Turtle Mountain in 1908 or 1910. They claimed the southwest corner of section 10-1-22 and built a log home near Sharpe Lake (then known as Long Lake). Louis paid the taxes on their land by trapping muskrats which were worth only five cents apiece at that time. In the 1920s Selina suffered from an illness which eventually took her life. The family travelled back to Beauford to bury her at the place where she grew up, then returned to Turtle Mountain to live.

Leah’s grandparents are Louis Racine Jr. and Alice Madeleine Godon (b. 1912). Alice was a descendent of Louis Godon who was a voyageur with Alexander Henry and the North West Company at Pembina and at Rat Portage before the NWC merged with the HBC. Louis had come with Alexandre Henry from La Pointe on Lake Superior. Louis had married “according to the custom of the country” Louise a Nakota (Assiniboine) woman. Louis Godon also received Halfbreed Scrip under the 1963-64 Red Lake and Pembina Chippewa Treaty.

Goddon, Louis [R.L. Scrip #362]

Minnesota Territorial Census, Pembina, 1850, family 42/42, born Red River Br., Hunter.

National Archives, RG 75, Entry 363, "List of Persons to Whom Scrip was Issued under Red Lake & Pembina Treaties...." Halfbreed Scrip No. 362 issued April 21, 1874, under the authority of Secretarial Decision, April 18, 1874, delivered April 21, 1874

National Archives, RG 75, Entry 364, "Treaty of April 12, 1864, Red Lake and Pembina Half-Breeds," Scrip Stubs, Number 362, dated April 21, 1874, 160 Acres, delivered April 21, 1874, issued to Louis Goddon, delivered to Agt. Douglass

husband of: Gadon, Isabella (1820), born Red River Br.

issue: Gadon, Louis (1836), born Red River Br.

Gadon, Joseph (1838), born Red River Br.

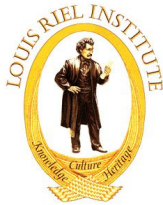
Gadon, Marguritte (1840), born Red River Br.

Gadon, Cathrin (1843), born Red River Br.
Gadon, Gelbert (1846), born Red River Br.
Gadon, David (1849), born Red River Br.

References:

Conway, Mary. *The Lilley Family History: A Manitoba Métis Genealogy*. Winnipeg: Conamara Publications, 2002.

Turtle Mountain–Souris Plains Heritage Association. “Beginning of the Metigoshe Community.” <http://vantagepoints.ca/>



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