

Clément Chartier. (b. 1946)

Clément Chartier, LL B., QC was born in 1946 at Ile à la Crosse, Saskatchewan and was raised in the nearby Métis community of Buffalo Narrows. He was called to the Bar and officially became a lawyer in 1980. Chartier served as President of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples between 1984-87 and vice-president between 1993-97.



Chartier has served as president of Canada's Métis National Council (MNC) since 24 October 2003. He was re-elected as MNC President on May 10, 2014. Previously, he was president of the Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) (1998-2003). He graduated with his B.A. in 1967: from Athol Murray College of Notre Dame, Wilcox, Saskatchewan; and completed his LL.B. in 1978 at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Saskatchewan.

In the late 1960s, after leaving a position with the provincial Department of Social Services, Chartier became a political activist after realizing that government was not serious about addressing the adverse social conditions faced by the Métis.

During his political career, Chartier has held a number of executive positions in Métis and Indigenous political bodies, including: Native Youth Association of Canada (executive director in the 1970s);

- 1973: Executive Director of the Native Youth Association of Canada.
- 1982-1985: Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS) (vice-president)
- MNC (chairperson, 1983 and 1985; ambassador, 1993–96; president, 2003-);
- World Council of Indigenous Peoples WCIP (president, 1984–87; vice-president, 1993–97);

In September 1984, at Panama City, Panama, Chartier was elected WCIP President, which was invited shortly thereafter to be an Observer at the peace talks between the government of Nicaragua and the Indian resistance movement (MISURASATA) in

Nicaragua under the leadership of Brooklyn Rivera. The WCIP remained an Observer at the subsequent three peace talk sessions in 1985. He served as President until July 1987.

The engagement of WCIP executive members in the resolution of the armed conflict between the revolutionary Sandinista government in Nicaragua and the Miskito, Sumu and Rama Indians of the Atlantic Coast caused considerable controversy. For some, the World Council revealed itself to be a communist ally, while for others it was a CIA pawn. The latter accusations gained momentum after WCIP-President Clem Chartier entered the Central American country illegally to accompany rebel leader Brooklyn Rivera on a so-called fact-finding mission and offered an international press conference later in Costa Rica. Despite this embarrassment of the Nicaraguan government, acknowledgement of the WCIP's efforts to find a peaceful solution, which led among other things to the Cease Fire Accord signed in Bogota (1984), came when the Sandinista government permitted the WCIP to organize an international seminar in 1988 on Treaty Rights and Autonomy in Managua, where the organization could claim some the responsibility for the region's recently-declared autonomous status (WCIP 1988, 15-19).

The decision to accompany Rivera was not agreed with by the other Executive Council members. Fearing for the independence of the WCIP to mediate the conflict, Chartier was finally removed from his office as president by his colleagues in the Council and substituted by Donald Rojas.

- In December 1993 Chartier was elected as one of the two Vice-Presidents of the WCIP and served in until the winding down of the WCIP in 1996.
- 1993-1996 he served the Métis Nation as International Ambassador.
- 1998 he was elected as President of the MN—S. He served as president from 1998 to 2003, when he was elected President of MNC. Chartier had worked with other Métis activists to dissolve the AMNSIS in 1988 and create a Métis-only political body, the reformulated Métis Society of Saskatchewan.
- 2003, he was elected as MNC President

References:

Chartier, Clem. *In the Best Interest of the Métis Child*. Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1964.

This monograph addresses the issue of Métis child welfare, explains the group interest the Métis have in their children, and examines initiatives taken by the Métis in this regard. It discusses problems unique to the Métis as opposed to First Nation's concerns.

_____. *Half-Breed Land and Money Scrip: Was this a Constitutionally Valid Method of Extinguishing Claim to Indian Title?* Saskatoon: College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, 1978.

- _____. “Indians: An Analysis of the Term Used in Section 91(24) of the British North America Act, 1867,” *Saskatchewan Law Review*, Vol. 43, 1978- 79: 42-49.
- _____. “Native People and the Legal System.” *New Breed*, 12 (4), 1981.
- _____. “Indigenous People Meet ... Geneva.” *New Breed*, 12 (4), 1981: 14-17.
- _____. “Métis Land Rights.” Ottawa: Native Council of Canada, 1982.
- _____. “Aboriginal Rights: The Métis Perspective.” Paper presented at the Aboriginal Rights Conference. Lethbridge, Alberta: January 20 1983.
- _____. “Aboriginal Rights and Land Issues: The Métis Perspective.” In Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long (Editors): *The Quest for Justice: Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal Rights*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985: 54-61.
- _____. “Métis Lands and Resources.” In *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Sharing the Harvest: The Road to Self-Reliance, Report of the National Round Table on Aboriginal Economic Development and Resources*. Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1993.
- _____. “Self-Government and the Métis Nation.” In John Hylton (Editor): *Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada: Current Trends and Issues*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1994: 199-214.

For an articulate and well-reasoned approach to the issue of self-government for the Métis Nation, Chartier’s article is useful. He uses the Métis National Council definition of who is Métis, and argues that “mixed-bloods” outside of the Métis homeland should not be in this category because they never constituted a distinct Aboriginal nation. After this preliminary discussion, he launches the reader into an overview of the last twenty years of negotiations between the Métis National Council and its affiliates for the creation of a Métis land base, which has been frustrated by the federal government’s position that the Métis people had their Aboriginal rights extinguished through the scrip process.

- _____. “Métis Perspective on Self-Government.” In Richard Gosse, James Youngblood Henderson, and Roger Carter (Editors): *Continuing Poundmaker and Riel’s Quest: Presentation Made at a Conference on Aboriginal Peoples and Justice*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1994: 83-87.

Chartier discusses what self-government for the Métis Nation would mean and he discusses how the Métis implemented self-government in the past and how they will do so in the future. As a Métis political leader, he discusses his frustration with the federal government’s obstructionist tactics and its denial of an obviously inherent right.

_____. “Governance Study: Métis Self-Government in Saskatchewan.” In *For Seven Generations: Research Reports, a research study prepared for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, March 16, 1995. Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Libraxius CD-ROM, 1997.

The author describes an infrastructure for self-government on a non-constitutional basis. He outlines the democratic exercise of elections, establishment of a legislative assembly and the creation of affiliated institutions for the delivery of programs and services. He also gives a useful review of current Métis self-government structures, and identifies and describes four distinct perspectives on governance including those of non-status Indians, Métis, off-reserve and urban peoples.

_____. “Aboriginal Self-Government and the Métis Nation.” In John Hylton (Editor): *Aboriginal; Self-Government in Canada*. Second edition. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Ltd., 1999: 112-129.

_____. *Witness to Resistance: Under Fire in Nicaragua*. Baico Publishing, 2011.



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