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Lillian Dyck A Voice for our People

"I was trying to sort out who I was... I had to sort of dig at that and address the shame that I had inherited..."

Photo credit: John Lagimodiere

**By Betty Ann Adam
of Eagle Feather News**

Senator Lillian Dyck was 36 when she completed her PhD in neurochemistry and determined it was time to reveal her Cree identity.

She was the same age then as her mother was when she died.

"I said, 'Okay. Now I have my PhD. I have earned the highest possible degree. Now I can admit that I'm an Indian and no one can look down on me,'" Dyck said in a recent interview.

Her mother, Eva McNab of George Gordon First Nation, had lost her Indian status when she married Quon Yok Leen in 1942.

"Mom did not want us to identify as Indian. Absolutely not. It was a big shame. If we did, it would just be big trouble for us. On her deathbed, it became very clear. 'Don't tell anybody you're Indian

and don't ever go back to the reserve.'"

Dyck retired this fall from the Senate of Canada, where she had served since 2005, after a career as a professor and associate dean at the University of Saskatchewan.

She proudly served as the first female First Nations Senator and the first Canadian-born Chinese Senator. She fought for an inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and against harassment of Indigenous and female senators and MPs by other politicians.

Her greatest satisfactions were in successfully attacking sexism in the Indian Act that stripped Indigenous women of their status when they married non-First Nations men and pushing through an amendment to the Criminal Code that now makes violence against Indigenous women an aggravating factor in sentencing.

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Brad Regehr First Indigenous President

As president of the CBA, Brad Regehr is now its spokesperson in Canada and internationally.

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October 2020 is our
RoleModel Issue

NEXT ISSUE: VETERANS



Tristen Durocher Woman help uplift during fast

The 24-year-old Metis man made headlines for walking 635 kilometers from Air Ronge to Regina over 29 days in July to protest the Saskatchewan government.

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Julie Paul - NOMINATED Designer of the Year

"I haven't been out there for years and then to come in there with something different was really intimidating,"

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Lillian Dyck found her voice and became a voice for her people

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FSIN vice chief Heather Bear has said Dyck, “has changed the landscape for Canada’s Indigenous women.”

Dyck’s mother, Eva McNab, went to the Indian Residential School at Gordon’s and one in Manitoba after that one burned down. She had rheumatic fever when she was a child, which later factored in her early death from heart failure, when Lillian was 10.

After residential school, Eva and her sister, Carrie, left the reserve, where intergenerational trauma from residential school and other Indian Act policies was manifesting in poverty, alcoholism and sexual abuse.

Eva never talked about her childhood but Lillian believes her mother’s determination to leave her Cree identity behind was rooted in the residential school legacy.

For women in those days, “their key to a good life was a good marriage,” Dyck said.

Her father, “was a handsome young man and a café owner, so he was a darned good catch.”

Quon had come to Canada at age 14 in 1912, to work and send money home. He had returned to China for visits and while there, had married and had two children.

He was unable to bring his family to join him because Canada banned Chinese immigration from 1923 to 1947. His wife was killed during the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and the family was scattered.

Quon and McNab were introduced by Carrie, who had married a Chinese



Senators Murray Sinclair, Sandra Lovelace Nicholas, Nancy Hartling, Lillian Dyck, Kim Pate, Gwen Boniface and Tobias Enverga during a Sisters in Spirit event for MMIWG, outside of the senate chamber. Oct 2017
Photo submitted

man who owned a restaurant.

Dyck and her brother, Winston, were the only Chinese students in the school in North Battleford and other small towns where they lived.

Her father also died young, when she was in grade 12. She realized she’d never thought to ask him about his childhood or their Chinese relations.

“Because it’s such a mystery, their life, and the things that happened to them has been the guiding story of what I do, what I’ve done in the Senate, to get to the root of the discrimination, to realize the Indian residential schools were so terribly bad (and) my dad had to pay a head tax. He couldn’t bring his family from China.”

At 36, Dyck replied to a Christmas card from a cousin and visited the reserve for the first time since childhood. She met her uncle Hilliard McNab, who by then had been the chief for many years. He told her she looked like her mother. He wept to have her home.

“It was very emotional,” she said.

Soon she began to meet her many cousins. After a lifetime without any relations, it was overwhelming to discover that she was related to most of the people at Gordon’s.

She was married, has a son, Nathan, and is divorced.



Senator Lillian Dyck, Pam Palmater, Sharon McIvor, Sen Sandra Lovelace Nicholas 2017. Photo submitted

In her work life at the university, she was dealing with a bully on the job and began seeing a counselor.

“I was trying to sort out who I was... I had to sort of dig at that and address the shame that I had inherited.

“It was shame that I felt of being an Indian and a woman that was holding me back and making me vulnerable.”

She sought out Indigenous women who guided her healing journey and introduced her to sweats and other ceremony. She says she found her voice. She stood up for students and women who were treated unfairly at the university and found some allies among the faculty.

Dyck doesn’t blame her mother for doing what she thought was best for herself and her children.

“I thank my mom for leaving the reserve; if we had lived there, I and my

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... continued

... brother would have had to attend residential school. She saved us from that abuse and a poorer quality of education. We were lucky that we ended up in Swift Current, which had an excellent high school... We suffered racism, bad, but not as bad as what was happening in residential schools," she says.

In 2005 Paul Martin appointed her to the Senate.

"It was so good to become a senator because... most of my life I'd been silenced... Suddenly I had the ability to voice, to be able to speak... because I didn't have a boss."

Many of her early speeches were about reclaiming identity, "all those things I should've had or could've had," she said.

"Who I am as person has determined my work in the Senate because I've focused on the Chinese Canadian issues (and) Indigenous women's rights.

"Here in Canada, someone like me could become a senator and change the laws that discriminated against people like my own family.... It's so incredible. They would never have believed it. I have no words for it," Dyck said.

Next, Dyck will have her Senate and public speeches printed and bound for her own library and will keep a digitized copy to share if there are requests.

She is also thinking of writing a book about the inside story of the push to amend the Criminal Code in her final months in the Senate.

She will also take some time to enjoy the freedom to watch and photograph the birds.



Senator Lillian Dyck, chair of the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, signs bill C-92, the First Nations Child Welfare bill, prior to tabling it in the Senate for third reading. June 2019. Photo submitted



Indigenous women Senators in front of the Speaker's chair in the new senate chamber in 2019. Patti Laboucane-Benson, Sandra Lovelace Nicholas, Lillian Dyck, Yvonne Boyer, Margaret Anderson and Mary Jane McCallum Photo submitted



Senator Lillian Dyck and Senator Sandra Lovelace Nicholas after Bill S-3, which eliminated sex-based inequities in the Indian Act, received Royal Assent in 2017. Photo submitted



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Survivors of the Residential Schools are some of my favourite role models

I recently had the opportunity to see a few of my role models shine. The City of Saskatoon held a press conference to encourage everyone to wear an orange shirt on September 30 to honour the children that did not come home from the Indian residential schools, the survivors of the schools and their families.

The Saskatoon Survivors Circle was represented by Gilbert Kewistep, Eugene Arcand and Mariea Linklater. The three champions are everywhere in the city, offering their guidance, leadership and themselves to the community. They influence our leaders; they engage the non-Indigenous population with their stories and presence, and they lift up fellow survivors and help them on their healing paths.

This day though, they gathered for the media. Gilbert is always soft spoken, and he stayed in the background, but asking Eugene and Mariea questions with media present is always a treat because you know they are not going to mince their words. I got the first question at the press event and asked Mariea what her day was going to look like for Orange Shirt Day. Four minutes and 20 seconds later she ended.

Here are the gold highlights that she told the media. "It will be a happy day, that I am able to see this day and tell the truth about what happened to us. As a result, you see what has happened to our people today. We are an industry. Our parents didn't know how to parent us and now it is hitting the other generations."

"Tomorrow I will start off with a smudge and think about Creator. Orange. It reminds me of the tiger lily and how beautiful it is, our Saskatchewan flower."

Then Mariea told a powerful story about one of her experiences in the school with a little boy

named Frankie. It is very triggering so I will not repeat it here, but several journalists had to listen to Mariea talk about abuse and murder in the schools and the lack of caring. It was moving. Gut wrenching. And those journalists had to hear her truth.

"We are never going to go away," said Mariea. "Some people tell us, get over it. I would like to see them get over it if they had their children murdered and beaten and thrown out. We are good and kind people and will continue to share and talk about



Residential school survivors from left Gilbert Kewistep, Eugene Arcand and Mariea Linklater were joined by Blue Jay and Teedly Linklater at a City of Saskatoon event encouraging participation in Orange Shirt Day activities to honour survivors of Indian Residential Schools.

Photo by John Lagimodiere

this."

The topper was when Mariea was asked the one thing Canadians can do to foster reconciliation in Canada. Her answer. "Loot! Money! So we can build our lodges to get well. We need healing centres to bring our families. Money talks."

To bring the point home, Eugene stepped forward with a book. It was the National Student Memorial Register: Remembering the Children that

Never Returned Home, a publication of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. The book contains almost 3000 names of the children that they have been able to confirm died in the residential schools. Eugene held it up and opened the pages so the reporters could see name after name of children that died because of government policy.

Eugene and Mariea, two leaders and survivors, in just seven minutes of interaction with the media, made a lasting and permanent impression on people who tell average Canadians the news on a daily basis. And our survivors, not just Eugene, Mariea and Gilbert, do this across the province on an almost daily basis.

Melissa Cote, the City of Saskatoon Director of Indigenous Engagement agrees about the impact of the survivors. "They are integral to the work that we do. If it weren't for them speaking their truth, we wouldn't be where we are today."

Let us lift those survivors up every time we see them. Their candor, bravery and the fact that they are still here moves them all up my role model list.

Now from role models to politicians

Wow, that was a hard turn, but we would be remiss to not mention the provincial election happening October 26th and the civic elections running province-wide in October and November. I tip my hat to anyone that throws their name in to run for public office. The demands of the job are onerous. People attack you for no reason and the job is mostly thankless. So, thank you for trying to serve our community. Those of us that don't run and just lob insults from the sideline, our job is to vote. So, vote by mail. Vote in early ballots or vote on V-day. However you do it, just do it. Vote. And wash your hands!



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CHECK OUT OUR LATEST TOP STORES



First Nations business to make highway signs

A new business owned mainly by two Saskatchewan First Nations has landed a contract to supply highway traffic signs in a pilot project with the Government of Saskatchewan.



Work begins on Elders Lodge at Pasqua First Nation

"What it will allow for is our Elders in our independent living complex that they can transition to our long-term care facility."



Treaty 6x hoodies, hats meant to wear and educate

"It was a relationship between two cultures, two nations, a bunch of Indigenous nations and the British government made Canada what it is today."

Breaking the Silence and Embracing our Voices

As I write this today on September 30th, Orange Shirt Day, I am thinking about what that means to me. The theme this month is role models, so I want to speak about mine, my grandmother Ruth Cameron. She is a role model in my life, in the community and in Saskatoon.

When I think of her, I think of my children. My daughters are the same age as she was when they took her to Lebret Residential School, away from her family, community and cut her off from her language and culture. All of my other grandparents were also forced to attend residential schools and I do my best to honour them all in my life. I think of them often as I continue to work to give my daughters a life that they would have wanted. I try my best to walk a life they would be proud of. We have been silenced for many years, as have the truths and stories of the Residential School system.

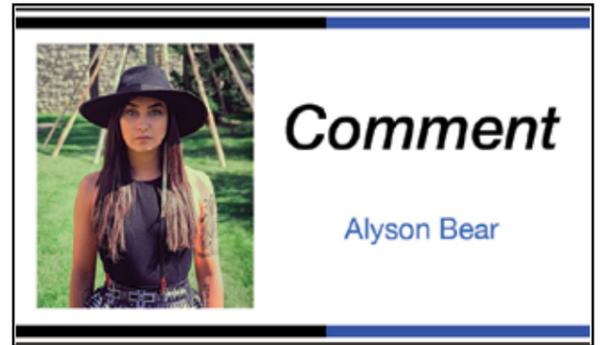
The reserve system was designed intentionally and not by Indigenous people. Therefore it was a way to keep First Nations out of sight and out of mind. Silence fell upon Indigenous Nations when the children were stolen. Silence is what has been ringing in our ears as we sit in classrooms where they teach us about Columbus and John A. Macdonald and their "triumphs" in the name of attempts to displace and assimilate Indigenous peoples from

our traditional territories and ways of life.

My grandma Ruth was one of the earliest to start trailblazing paths in colonial institutions and professions, helping others navigate these colonial systems. She worked hard within the Catholic School Board dedicating her life to helping others, despite everything she went through in residential school and dealing with the enduring effects. This type of selflessness is something I aspire to in my own life and it is something that comes, not from the trauma that has been injected into our bloodstream from the colonial mission of assimilation, but from our traditional Indigenous ways and kinship laws.

Some people do not understand that Indigenous people have had to face systemic discrimination. As Indigenous people, we have not been able to put down roots in cities and pass on generational wealth, land and property that is passed down in a lot of families where people have had opportunity. It becomes easier to get lost in these colonial concrete systems.

My grandma is my role model because she has showed me the way to live, thrive, survive, provide, and all while helping others. She is still on many boards including the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and is the Elder for Saskatchewan Polytechnic. She has accomplished so much and in



a time when Indigenous peoples were heavily and openly discriminated against.

Systemic racism is still evident as seen in the recent injustice that happened to Joyce Echaquan. She was the Indigenous woman who was mocked and ridiculed while in the hospital seeking help. Before she passed away, she recorded the racist repulsive remarks the nurses made about her. This speaks volumes about the work that needs to be done to create safe spaces for Indigenous peoples and voices.

If racism is still so prevalent today, how much worse must it have been for my grandparents when they were children trapped in residential schools?

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Durocher depended upon women during fast

By Judith Iron
for Eagle Feather News

Tristen Durocher experienced hunger and confusion during his 44-day fast outside the Saskatchewan Legislature, but women were there to support him.

The 24-year-old Métis man made headlines for walking 635 kilometers from Air Ronge to Regina over 29 days in July to protest the Saskatchewan government defeating an NDP bill intended to prevent suicide, which has become a leading cause of death among Indigenous youth.

Durocher vowed he would stop eating for 44 days, one day for each member of the legislature who voted against the bill, but said he would end the fast sooner if the government took definitive action against suicide.

Large portraits of persons who died by suicide surrounded the teepee in Wascana Park where he stayed so that visitors would see that the human beings who were loved and lost were not just statistics.

Men and women joined Durocher on the walk but he wanted women around him during the fast.

"Women are just naturally nurturing and that's what I needed. I wanted women around who would help me decompress and ask me how I'm feeling, what I need, and how can they help. They were attentive and supportive. It kept me strong," he said.

He drank only water and tea, but took vitamins and used traditional medicines that would promote cardiovascular health, boost his immune system, and keep his brain healthy. He didn't weigh himself but noticed that his clothes got looser.

"As long as I felt healthy and was feeling active, the numbers on the scale were irrelevant," he said.

Near the end of the fast Durocher had some confu-

sion. He had purchased a regular tobacco pipe, which is supposed to help with cravings. He asked a friend if he'd shown her the pipe he'd bought and to his surprise, she told him she had taken him to the store that afternoon to buy it.

"It was like having a little amnesia," he said with a laugh.

"My friends and supporters noticed so I no longer went anywhere unsupervised."

Prior to starting his fast, Durocher spoke with friends, elders and relatives who have fasted and knew what to expect. He warned young people that he had mental health and medical support, including having a doctor visit to check on him.

"I did not willingly try to endanger my health and wellbeing," he said.

He admits it wasn't easy and visitors often questioned his action.

"When there is a fast there is an urgency to break it. I gave the power to the government of Saskatchewan. They could have broken it any day, so any harm from me restricting food is actually a harm that the province allowed because they had the capacity and the means to break it, but they lacked the will to do so," he said.

On the 44th day, September 13, the Walking with Angels camp had a pipe ceremony and feast, where Durocher had a bowl of buffalo soup.

Then he led supporters to the steps of the legislature, where he cut off his braid, which in Cree culture symbolizes mourning, letting go of pain, moving forward, healing, and starting again.

He made a noose with his braid combined with others donated by friends.

"Our braids tied into a noose and hung on the



Tristen Durocher fasted on the lawn of the legislative building for 44 days this summer. One day for every member that voted against a suicide bill. Photo submitted

door handles of the legislative assembly is a powerful image that tells the story of the state having some responsibility and culpability in the suicides that happen in Indigenous communities because of their negligent indifference," he said.

The group left the noose on the door for ten minutes then removed it and burned it in the ceremonial fire.

Eleven day after Durocher ended his 44-day fast, the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan and the Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations signed a promise to work together to create holistic suicide prevention services for Indigenous youth.

Durocher has said since then that he will wait and see what actually happens before commenting on it.

He intends to return to Manitoba soon, where he is a music teacher.



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Life long learner Ahenakew works hard, gives back

By Brendan Mayer
for Eagle Feather News

Richard Ahenakew started as a janitor at the Northern Lights Casino, worked his way up to the general manager's office and then took leadership at the provincial Chamber of Commerce.

Ahenakew was hired at the casino in Prince Albert in 1996 when it opened and has been GM for 16 years.

"I took every chance I had to learn and I moved up within the organization," Ahenakew said. "I always worked hard and I never left."

Ahenakew didn't originally plan to stay at the casino long term or become general manager.



Richard Ahenakew worked his way up to the manager's office at the at the Northern Lights Casino and has led the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. Photo by Brendan Mayer

"I thought if I can learn enough I would move away to Vancouver and get a different job," he said. "Now I can't picture myself elsewhere."

Ahenakew is a member of the Ahtahkakoop First Nation and has lived in Prince Albert for most of his life. He studied at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, now known as First Nations University of Canada.

He takes professional development seriously and has earned certificates in management, executive training and gaming management along the way.

"My mom taught me that you're not going to know everything so just keep on learning," he said.

"I learned that you have to work hard and you have to support your community."

Ahenakew likes to share the spotlight with his mother, Priscilla Joseph, who he says has been a great role model.

"My mom is a giver," he said.

Joseph has four children and is an Elder originally from the Ahtahkakoop First Nation and is a member of the Big River First Nation. She supports and counsels students at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies in Prince Albert and helps people with addictions and mental health challenges. Joseph has been asked to speak at many funerals and offers support to grieving families.

"I'm really happy when my children and other young people are taking the reins to do some of the work that I have done in the past," she said.

"Richard provides support or counselling. So many young people benefit from him. He goes out to buy their graduation dress, gown and suit. It's the value of empowering individuals that stands out," she said.

Ahenakew will receive the Roger Phillips Chamber Builder Award at the ABEX Awards this fall for his long-standing history of committing time and leadership to the chamber network in Saskatchewan.

He served on the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce for 12 years and is the first First Nations person to be elected chair of a provincial chamber in Canada.

"It opened doors," Ahenakew said. "The chamber was able to develop closer relationships with groups like the FSIN. They honestly cared about Aboriginal issues. It's a good map for other provinces to follow."

"I was doing what I could to make the province better. It was such a great experience. Now this is something other First Nations people know they can do."

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Jigger Anaquod nominated for modeling award

By Jeanelle Mandes
of Eagle Feather News

Courtney-Dawn Anaquod from the Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation is living the dream to be a runway model and has been nominated as Indigenous Model of the Year in Regina's International Indigenous Fashion Week (IIFW) Inc.



Courtney-Dawn Anaquod is nominated as Indigenous Model of the Year at Regina's International Indigenous Fashion Week. Photo submitted by Courtney-Dawn Anaquod

"I've always had an interest in modeling. It has always been a dream of mine ever since I could remember," she said.

When Anaquod was a teenager, there were tryouts for modeling in Regina, where she was chosen to be in a commercial. She was invited to sign up with a modeling agency but couldn't afford the \$900 fee. Her father had worked hard to try to get the money for her but couldn't come up with it either. He then told her something that still resonates with her to this day.

"Don't worry my girl. Your time will come when you want to be a model. Don't rush life and let that time come to you," she said echoing his words.

"In 2019, that time came to me. I caught the eye of Christine Tienkamp of SS River Designs. It was through a jigging workshop that I had done for her."

Tienkamp said she liked how Anaquod presented herself at the River Road Festival in St. Louis, Sask., last year.

"When Courtney approached me, she was so professional and poised. She dressed professionally and conducted herself with confidence, she was genuine and committed to her dance troupe," said Tienkamp. "I knew that she would be great to model for my clothing line, SS River Designs, as she has a unique look, she is gracious and friendly, truly beautiful inside and out."

Tienkamp added that Anaquod is humble and yet she takes the opportunities to share her gifts, which is why she nominated her for Model of the Year.

"She is a role model for all young women... and I truly hope she gets some recognition from that event. I am confident she will continue to be successful

at modeling and be on the international stage at some point," said Tienkamp.

"She is always happy to share her story and her journey. I know that wherever life takes her, she will use it as a stage to communicate a positive story for youth and other women."

During Regina Fashion Week in 2019, this was Anaquod's modeling debut, which opened a lot of doors for her.

Since then, international designers started reaching out to her.

Anaquod was also asked to be an extra in a movie filmed in Regina last November called Cagefighter: Worlds Collide with Chuck Liddell, a retired American mixed martial artist and former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion.

"It was another dream to be in a movie," Anaquod said.

"It's not just playing the leading role or the main character, it was just the feeling that I got to be a part of a big movie."

Anaquod is also a jigging instructor and has been known as the dancer who can jig in stilettos.

She also runs a group called Qu'Appelle Valley Square Dancers, which has performed throughout Saskatchewan and Alberta for the past three years. She created the dance group in honour of her late grandfather, Morris Anaquod, who was a fiddle player champion. He and her late grandmother Theresa are her biggest inspirations.

Throughout all her life achievements, Anaquod always had the love and support from her late husband, Dale Shatilla who died suddenly February 25, 2020.

"He believed in me so much, in pursuing all of my dreams and to never give up and to always keep pushing myself," she said.

Voting for the competition ends on Wednesday, October 21. Winners of the first Indigenous Arts & Fashion Awards event will be held virtually on October 24 on the IIFW Facebook page.

If Anaquod wins the competition, she will be on her way to model in New York City, to walk on the runway during Fashion Week of September 2021 and to have the opportunity to have a professional fashion photoshoot.



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Participate, contribute says Gabe Lafond

By *Sophia Lagimodiere*
for *Eagle Feather News*

Originally from the northern Métis community of Green Lake, Gabe Lafond was the youngest in his family. His father was a trapper and worked in the uranium mines, teaching him the importance of working hard and always telling him, “don’t wait, get things done now.” His mother was a “domestic engineer,” taking care of raising all 11 children.

His upbringing and 20 years of senior executive management experience have provided him with a repertoire of skills that have led him to become LutherCare Communities’ CEO.

Lafond’s father passed away when he was 15 and he moved to Saskatoon with his mother, where he had to adapt quickly.

“(It was) a bit of a journey on its own. Coming into the urban center, you’re coming into a whole different environment where there’s culture shock,” Lafond said.

While in high school he worked at Zellers and did lawn work for seniors. Once in university, he worked for Métis Nation-Saskatchewan developing a provincial youth council. Later, he ran as a leader for the MN-S and was acclaimed as Treasurer. After three years, he stepped down to run as a member of parliament and was nominated as the Liberal candidate for the Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River riding. This was a big moment for Lafond before he even achieved the representation within the federal process.

“I felt it was important to get an opportunity to actually represent a constituency as big as [that riding]. And I knew it wasn’t going to be an easy task,” Lafond said. “However, I had relationships out in the communities, and I was encouraged by the elders, I was encouraged by community members.”

He moved his way up the corporate ladder when the Saskatoon Health Region hired him as the Director of Representative Workforce and First Nations and Métis health. He then became Executive Director of First Nations and Métis health for the SHA before becoming CEO of LutherCare Communities.

“[LutherCare’s] model really is that we want to provide a safe and caring continuum of living for everyone, which includes First Nations and Métis.”

Lafond credits his parents for being loving role models who taught him how to be a good father. His political icon would be Jim Sinclair because of his advocacy for Métis Nation rights to fishing, hunting and human rights. Lafond also recognizes many great operational and administrative leaders who guided and coached him.

He encourages young people to get involved with their communities and to never give up on their goals and dreams.

“Participate. Contribute into the economy, contribute to your community, contribute to your family, and you will never go wrong,” Lafond said. “I always lead to spirituality. Everything I do always starts with having faith and believing in what you’re doing. It always works out in the end.”



Gabe Lafond is the new CEO of LutherCare Communities. Photo by John Lagimodiere




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Longest serving chief in Canada, Day Walker-Pelletier passes the torch

By Morgan Esperance
of Eagle Feather News

On October 20 at midnight, Chief Marie-Ann Day Walker-Pelletier will retire after nearly 40 years serving Okanese First Nation.

Day Walker-Pelletier's hope for the next Chief and Council is to continue the things she worked on.

"Our culture and language, our knowledge, our ceremonies, we've really



Chief Marie-Ann Day Walker-Pelletier received high accolades and gifts from her fellow Chiefs at FHQTC upon her retirement. Here Tribal Chief Edmund Bellegarde presented her with a painting. Photo credit FHQTC

emphasized the importance of that...for our children, our adults, our elders," she said.

Day Walker-Pelletier ran for Chief because band members asked her to help the First Nation. She became Chief on March 5, 1981.

At age 26, she was the only female chief and says she was intimidated because she was in a male dominated role, but she persevered.

Day Walker-Pelletier said she had to find her voice and address issues in her own way. In her early years, there were older male Chiefs who spoke the Cree language in a sexual way about her.

"They didn't know that (I knew,) I just let them go on and on and talk. Then one day I just got fed up with it and I said, 'you know, Chief, I really understand Cree.' That was the end of that."

"I always read or did a bit of research on what I was going to be doing. I tried to be equal to the males," she said.

Day Walker-Pelletier has set an example for female Chiefs to stand up for each other, such as the time she had the FSIN Women's Committee elevated to the Women's Commission.

One of Day Walker-Pelletier's challenges was dealing with Indian Affairs' colonial thinking.

"Changing their mentality to recognize that First Nations way of thinking, way of living, way of accepting things is different from their policies that they initiate, that one shoe does not fit all," she said.

A highlight for Day Walker-Pelletier was working for 10 years to get a facility for child and family welfare. When it finally became a reality, elders named it "DayWalker Home Fire Family Center."

"Now we've got a home that will be opening soon to facilitate and reintegrate our kids back into their families and back into their communities," she said.

Day Walker-Pelletier's mentors are elders and knowledge keepers who have guided her over the years. She said there are too many to name, but she relied on them for prayers for health and at the beginning of projects in the community.

"They always told me that people may be angry, not because they're angry at you (but) they're angry at themselves and they're voicing out their anger because deep down they're hurting. It took me a while to understand that,"

she said.

Connie Big Eagle, Chief of Ocean Man First Nation, said she will miss Day Walker-Pelletier's good sense and warmth.

"She's sensible, not everyone has that," said Big Eagle.

Sometimes during meetings, a conversation would "go astray" and Day Walker-Pelletier would speak up and turn the whole conversation around, leading to a reasonable motion, she said.

Big Eagle got to know Day Walker-Pelletier when Big Eagle accompanied her mother, the late Chief Laura Big Eagle, to meetings in the two years before she died, helping her ailing mother to continue her work.

After her mother died, band members encouraged her to run for chief, which she did. When she showed up at meetings in her mother's place, Day Walker-Pelletier welcomed her and dubbed her, "Baby Chief."

In 2019, Day Walker-Pelletier received the Order of Canada for her work and determination as the longest serving Chief. Governor General Julie Payette presented the award as her family looked on.

"Just being among all those people and I was thinking to myself, 'oh man. Here's little old me.' It was quite the experience," she said.

Her advice for anyone who intends to run for chief, is to do it because you want to help the people and be prepared to make sacrifices in your personal life.

"(My family) kind of had to live on their own while I was being Chief," she said.

"Are you prepared to sacrifice one hundred per cent? A Chief does not have a nine-to-five job. It's 24-seven."

In her retirement, Day Walker-Pelletier will concentrate on writing a book about her life and call it "Against the Odds."

She also intends to allow things to come to her instead of going to them.

The File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council has established a \$40,000.00 bursary fund in her name to be distributed over 4 years with \$10,000.00 per year to a deserving student.

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Reporter Agecoutay does stint in the big cities

By Morgan Esperance
of Eagle Feather News

After 12 years with CTV Regina, Creeson Agecoutay was tapped for a two-week stint in Toronto and Ottawa with CTV National News.

"It's like a dream come true. It's something. I never thought that was going to happen for me, to get this opportunity," Agecoutay said.

Nearing the end of the two weeks, he said the difference between Saskatchewan cities and Toronto are like night and day.

"You really have to be strategic when working out here, you can't be like



Creeson Agecoutay was with CTV National News in Toronto and Ottawa for two weeks. Photo supplied

Regina or Saskatoon where it takes fifteen minutes to get anywhere," he said.

Agecoutay said it gets lonely being out there and not knowing anyone, but he cherishes each day because it is a wonderful opportunity.

"We need more Indigenous reporters nationally... for voices to be here at the national stage but also for younger generations to look up to," he said.

Agecoutay graduated from the University of Regina School of Journalism in 2013.

"I was filing stories in Saskatoon every once in a while, and in Regina," Agecoutay said.

"And over the years, I kind of caught the attention of the national news desk in Toronto...I caught their eye and (in August) I got an email."

The short term assignment opens the possibility of a permanent position in the future.

When he was a student at the Indigenous Communication Arts (INCA) program at First Nations University of Canada, Agecoutay was trained by (now) CTV News Editor Nelson Bird and cameraman Gareth Ellison.

After he finished university and was hired at CTV Regina, Bird assigned him to host Indigenous Circle while reporting. Bird has mentored Agecoutay throughout his time at CTV Regina.

"I was so ecstatic, and I was almost brought to tears because we worked so hard on sharing, telling, and making the issues of Indigenous people," Bird said.

Bird said he and Creeson worked hard to bring the stories of Indigenous people to light, and after being with CTV for 22 years he believes this was the step in the right direction for Indigenous people across the country.

"His success is our success," Bird said.

"You can tell by the comments that the reaction from people all over the place...it's time it's needed with CTV."

Bird and Agecoutay texted each other regularly during his big city gig.

Agecoutay said he is there to inspire younger generations and show them their goals are attainable and they can follow their dreams.

"Work hard, do things that scare you because in the end you'll come out a better and stronger journalism student," Agecoutay said.

"I was scared when I was an INCA student. I was scared to even pick up a microphone and talk to somebody. I was shaking."

Agecoutay mentors INCA and journalism students throughout his busy days in Regina and continues to do so while he is in Toronto.

"It's kind of like I have to pinch myself here. I'm going out East and I'm going to be in the same room with all these people I grew up watching," Agecoutay said.



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Regalia maker nominated for International Indigenous designer of the year

By Morgan Esperance
of Eagle Feather News

Julie Paul of Ochapowace First Nation has been nominated for designer of the year at the International Indigenous Arts & Fashion Awards, which will be held in Regina in October.

"I'm just really happy for this award and I just think that nomination in itself is just a really cool thing for me. Its kind of kicked me into a higher gear and what I can do with this gift," she said.

Paul said her late grandmother always told her to grow out her hair and get back to dancing powwow like she did as a child.

"She passed away and then I just kind of made the decision right there to start dancing again," said Paul.

"Because she really did help me when I was young, and it helped me as a young person.

Right after the funeral, Paul went to Fabricland for material and found vinyl to experiment with and create her regalia.

She made her first regalia within two weeks, using rhinestones and gems. She attended Piapot powwow where she was admired by attendees.

"I haven't been out there for years and then to come in there with something different was really intimidating," Paul said.

Originally, Paul had planned to become a lawyer, but after applying to law school twice and not getting in, she changed her focus to regalia. Some years earlier, she had been told at church that she would have jewels and garments. Because she planned to be a lawyer, she interpreted the information to mean she would have money and lawyers' clothing, she said.

At a powwow someone bought her regalia and someone else asked her to make a women's traditional cape.

Paul worked for three days solid on the outfit and when she finished, she realized she had been mistaken about the meaning of the jewels and garments she'd heard of in church.

"I was just admiring this big cape I made," Paul said.

"Then I looked around my house and I saw a bunch of garments and material...I lived in a small apartment and all the gems and jewels were everywhere. And just like that, I knew."

Some people told her Christianity and Indigenous spirituality don't mix, but she believes God wants her to use her gifts as she does.

"He was giving this to me," she said.

Paul also does designs on wedding gowns. The idea came while shopping for material in thrift stores and finding used gowns.

"I have a bunch of them collecting, I knew eventually I wanted to do something and make something," Paul said.

"I'm learning how to make (them) from scratch, then I'll be able to figure



Julie Paul of Ochapowace First Nation has been nominated for designer of the year at the International Indigenous Arts & Fashion Awards to be held in October in Regina. Photo supplied

out how I make my own, not just a pre-made one."

In January, Paul quit her regular job to keep up with all the orders and stayed busy through the COVID shutdown. She took a business partner and hired a crew of six.

"I just worked hard and I just didn't give up," Paul said.

"I think that with the designer of the year award, I feel like it's just the next stage to developing it further. Just how my regalia was before, how it grows in stages. It's going to change again, so, I'm just really excited for that."



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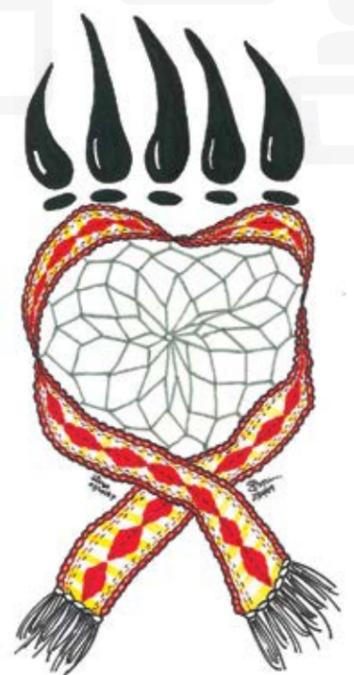
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Greyeyes sees need for Indigenous school board trustees

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

Kimberly Greyeyes is getting used to seeing her name on ballots and she'd like to see more Indigenous names on school board ballots this fall.

Greyeyes is a fourth-generation residential school survivor, and while she was growing up on a family farm on Peepeekisis Cree Nation, her parents taught her that "we're federal," and her family did not have a place in provincial politics. But she has come to believe this is exactly where she belongs.

"I've learned we have to get involved," she said.

"If we want things to change, our voices need to be heard. If we want better for our children and our grandchildren, we need to step up. I don't want children having to heal from their childhood. I want children that are ready and willing and capable of going out there and doing what needs to be done without having to heal first."

Greyeyes was elected to the Prairie Spirit School Board representing Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in 2016 and quickly impressed her fellow board members - the first-term trustee was also elected last year to serve the Indigenous Constituency on the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) executive.

She is the first Indigenous woman to hold this seat, representing the 11 per cent of school board trustees in the province who are First Nations or Métis.

In her role on the executive, Greyeyes has been promoting stronger partnerships between First Nations and provincial schools.

"[At Muskeg Lake] we've built a local cultural cabin ... and at Blaine Lake, they've had their first ever powwow," she said. "And this cultural cabin benefits both schools. It gives our First Nations students somewhere to go to do their cultural learning, and all provincial students come out and do their land-based learning. So we're reducing the lines between First nations and non-First Nations children, and I've advocated for things like that."

She is also in the early stages of working on an accountability framework for the TRC Calls to Action, so schools and school boards will be able to measure their progress.

SSBA executive director Darren McKee says Greyeyes' work and perspective on the executive has helped focus a spotlight on Indigenous student needs throughout the province.

"As an Indigenous person, as I came into this role, I found there wasn't as much focus on that as there is today," McKee said.

"I think that's growth in the system. It certainly makes a difference when it comes to responding to the needs of all kids. When there are folks out there you can relate to, it makes the whole thing much easier to approach. Kimberly has

provided us with an opportunity to highlight and profile trusteeship from an Indigenous perspective."

Greyeyes, who is up for reelection this year, decided to run in 2016 as her older children were getting to the end of their high school careers.

"I'd had six kids go to our local school, and I had run into some challenges, which made me have to learn how to move things forward and go through official processes," she said.

"I've lived the inequalities in the availability of programs and services for our First Nations children. That was one of the biggest reasons I chose to run - I've lived it, I've been there."

She also brings her career background in administration and human resources to the role, and has been furthering her own education, even as she advocates for youth in schools - she is taking classes at the University of Saskatchewan toward a commerce degree.

There is still time for people to put their names forward for school board trustee by going to their school board's website - the initial nomination deadline is October 7th, and a second call for nominations will go until October 21st if necessary. The election will take place November 9th, and Greyeyes hopes to see many Indigenous candidates on the ballot this year.

"There was a time, quite honestly, when I couldn't have imagined somebody like me sitting as a school board trustee, let alone for the province, (because) number one, I'm female, and number two, I'm Aboriginal," Greyeyes said.

"Being the Indigenous trustee voice is one of my biggest priorities right now. I want people to realize that they can do it - they can run, they can be elected."



Kimberly Greyeyes, who was elected last year to serve on the SSBA executive, is now encouraging others to vote and run in local elections. Photo submitted by Kimberly Greyeyes

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- 3 What commitments will you and your government make to provide public reporting on water quality that is easily accessible and frequently updated?

For background information, go online to: www.lqws.ca

Meili promises NDP would do a complete review of the child welfare system

By Nathan Raine
for Eagle Feather News

As the October 26 2020 general election approaches, complex issues, including COVID-19 response, child welfare, and graduation rates, affect many Indigenous individuals and communities across the province.

Eagle Feather News reached out to Scott Moe, leader of the Saskatchewan Party, and Ryan Meili, leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) to gain their insights on a handful of key issues, starting simply with the question of why Indigenous people should consider voting for their party.

"The biggest reason is that we're actually interested in Indigenous people, which is a pretty stark difference from what we've seen with the Saskatchewan Party," said Meili.

"We recognize there is a big gap when it comes to the health outcomes, education, employment, and involvement in the justice system, and we need to close that gap. The province has been a barrier to that, and we instead will work to honour the treaties and work with Indigenous communities to close that gap."

COVID-19 hit several First Nations and isolated communities in 2020, with many communities undergoing a complete shut-down. The northern town of La Loche had two long-term care residents die of the virus, prompting an epidemiologist from the University of Toronto to call it the most concerning COVID-19 outbreak in the Canada at the time.

What will you do to help communities get back on their feet and ensure their safety as the pandemic continues?

"We've had pretty mixed messages... when it comes to the Sask Party and Indigenous communities," Meili said.

"I was on the phone in those early weeks of COVID-19 with community leaders, who were just asking for support to get masks and other equipment, to get clear guidance on how to do check stops and closing their communities if they wanted to, and they just weren't getting any answers."

Meili said the first step is to develop better relationships with these communities. He said many First Nations businesses and individuals are struggling financially and there needs to be investment in people and communities now. As cases go up in the fall, government must communicate with clear messages and clear support for communities to stay safe, he said.

This year also saw the highest number of drug overdoses and overdose deaths in the province in a decade. What will your government do to support these at-risk individuals?

Meili said that, as a doctor, the lack of addictions treatment facilities is frustrating.

"Patients would come in and say, 'I'm ready to change,' and there would be no (treatment centre) bed. They'd wait months to see a psychiatrist and it's hard to get a counsellor. (There's) so little support for mental health and addictions," he said.

There are far more people using crystal meth and more dangerous opioids than in the past, he said.

"We're losing people. Far too many. We need to work in harm reduction so the people that are using are safe... We want people to have the support to get past their addiction, but also make sure that while they're struggling and using, they're able to do so in a way that they're not getting HIV or Hepatitis C, or dying of an overdose."

Meili said he is committed to expanding the supports, with more community based counselling, so people can get help early and have easier access to addiction counselling that lasts long enough for people to get clean and build up strength to stay clean.

Recently, Indigenous high school graduation rates saw a decline in Saskatchewan, according to data from 2019, in which three-year grad rates dropped to 43.4 percent from 44.5 per cent. How is your government going to improve Indigenous graduation rates?

Meili said schools need to be adequately funded and that underfunding is happening both on and off reserve.

"Saskatchewan schools are overcrowded, there are more kids with special needs, more kids with mental health troubles and way more kids coming to school hungry," he said.

"We need to fund our schools well enough so that when kids are in schools, they're getting supports that meets their needs," he said.

"We also need to be thinking about the upstream factors that influence whether kids will succeed in school. We have a quarter of Saskatchewan kids living in poverty. A majority of those kids living in poverty are First Nations," he said. "We want kids to graduate, we want to make sure they have a decent place to stay, we want to make sure they have enough to eat, that they have some hope in their lives."

"That all comes back to that approach to closing those gaps and making sure every kid has a chance both at home and in school to be successful and safe."

Finally, child welfare in Saskatchewan remains a critical issue, with 3,412 children in the province's care last year, 86 percent of whom were Indigenous. Additionally, 25 child welfare deaths have been recorded this year.

Do you have a plan to fix or improve the child welfare system?

"We need a very thorough review of the child welfare system We've seen the number of kids who are in care grow and grow. We're over 5,000 kids that are separated from their family now. We still see birth alerts and adoptions at birth... This is a



MLA Ryan Meili, Leader of the NDP Saskatchewan. Photo courtesy Doyle Fox

system that isn't working, this is a system that is an extension of residential schools, and a precursor for a lot of people lining up in corrections," said Meili.

Meili said the NDP would do a complete review of the child welfare system, and put programs in place to help support families and keep them together. They would provide culturally appropriate homes for children who do need to be put in care, he said.

Meili also committed to providing free tuition for youth who reach 18 while in foster care.

Scott Moe declined to speak with Eagle Feather News.

In the days before the writ was issued to formally begin the election period, a representative provided email responses from staff in the Government of Saskatchewan Ministries of Health and Education. These did not include a response to the question of children in foster care.

Because this election-related story is about political party leaders' views, we made several attempts to speak with Moe, but he did not respond.

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Indigenous city council candidates running in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert

By **Nathan Raine**
for *Eagle Feather News*

Political candidates across the province are readying their platforms and knocking on doors as municipal elections take place this October. Eagle Feather News spoke with Indigenous candidates running for city council in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert (coincidentally, all in Ward 3s) on how they hope to provide change in their home community. There were no Indigenous candidates in Yorkton or North Battleford.

Elmer Eashappie

Ward 3, Regina

Lifelong resident of Regina, and member of Carry the Kettle Nakoda Nation, Elmer Eashappie has long planned to run for city council in his hometown, which he said lacks Indigenous participation in civic leadership.

"One of the challenges in Regina is that our voice is not really heard at the city council level. I want to be that change," said Eashappie.

Eashappie's background includes serving on the board of directors at Canadian Western Agribition and as an Aboriginal Cultural Advisor to newspapers and other companies. He is perhaps most proud of the role he played in helping Regina, in 2011, become the first city in Canada to raise a First Nations flag at a city hall.

What sets Eashappie apart from many candidates is his first-hand experience dealing with some difficult issues that afflict many people.

"Homelessness – I've been homeless ... Poverty, been there, done that. Addictions, been there, done that. I understand a lot of these social issues," he said, adding he has been sober for 22 years.

"Now I want to give back," he said.

At the time of writing this article, Eashappie said he will form his platform by asking residents of Ward 3 for their top five civic concerns. Poverty, addiction, economic development, and mental wellness are the issues he's most passionate about.

He said a city councillor is like the CEO of a company, and the residents are like shareholders, and as such, he would provide a quarterly report to Ward 3.

"I want to be the reason (for more Indigenous people voting). I believe previously, Indigenous people didn't (think they had) a reason to vote, they didn't understand they had strength in numbers. If we get all Indigenous people together and vote as a block, we can make a lot of changes at all levels in society."

Chris Sicotte

Ward 3, Saskatoon

"The thing that appeals to me about municipal politics is that you're making decisions that affect people right there in their homes. It's a very grassroots level process."

Sicotte, of Cree/Metis heritage, has called Saskatoon home since 2002. He recently served as Board Chair at the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, National Chair of Aboriginal



Elmer Eashappie. Photo courtesy Elmer Eashappie



Chris Sicotte. Photo courtesy Chris Sicotte

Financial Officers Association, and is currently Indigenous Liaison with Aon insurance.

He has experience reviewing fiscal policy at provincial and municipal levels, and has seen the impacts leadership decisions can make in a community in the short and long term, he said.

"Indigenous people bring a perspective that the rest of mainstream society may overlook. When we're going through a tough decision-making process, especially as it relates to environment or family, those are the guiding principles that move Indigenous people."

Sicotte is most committed to reconciliation in two different streams.

The first stream, social reconciliation, includes measures like the naming of new buildings and streets, responses to the TRC Calls to Action, and calls to justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Of equal importance is economic reconciliation – recognizing that Indigenous communities are economically disadvantaged and taking action to rectify those obstacles.

"Indigenous people need the same economic prosperity that other citizens of Saskatoon enjoy as well. Part of that is building more inclusive and dynamic partnerships with Indigenous and First Nations businesses," he said.

Sicotte is not short on plans for if he's elected. His ideas include increasing community safety through a police-involved community-based approach; developing an economic strategy to provide jobs and in turn lower crime; increase vehicle access to the Parkridge area; building stronger relationships with community associations; and engaging with new Canadians in Ward 3.

"I'm so proud of how this city embraces diversity and looks into being more inclusive. That's something I will continue to work towards because, in the end, that's how we become a better city."

Tony Head

Ward 3, Prince Albert

Tony Head is no stranger to being a voice of the people. For the past nine years, Head has been working for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Before that, Head was a City of Prince Albert employee for eleven years, working in the water utilities department.

"I'm running to be a voice and a representative for my neighbours, fellow residents and community," he said.

"I've followed the operations at city hall closely and am familiar with the operations and spending in the city, and know first hand that we can do better."

Head said it's important Prince Albert city council reflects the diversity of the people in the community.

"Our politicians often forget the people who elected them. Being accessible to people is important ... we need to be inclusive so people feel there is a balanced perspective. I think our council has been lacking that for many terms," he said.

His priorities include transparency and accountability in spending at city hall, community health and safety, and poverty.

He wants the city to invest in more programs and services to help the development of young people.

"In Ward 3, the incumbent has talked about gangs and poverty being an Indigenous issue. It's a social issue. It's not specific to First Nations or Metis youth. So, I want to look at programming to give people alternatives to have another option in life," he said.

"I think Indigenous people can swing the tide. We can elect progressive candidates; we can elect First Nations and Indigenous people who will unite our councils and governments through every level."



Tony Head. Photo by Alisha Head

Book sheds light on aftereffects of Residential School

By Morgan Esperance
of Eagle Feather News

Author Bevann Fox explores the effect Indian Residential School had on her character's adult relationships in her recently released *Genocidal Love: Life After Residential School*, published by University of Regina Press.

Fox, from Piapot and Pasqua First Nations, began writing *Genocidal Love* four years ago, after self-publishing her first book about residential schools, called *Abstract Love*.

The new book is fiction but, like the first, is based on true events said Fox, who presents herself as Myrtle in the books.

"Writing about Myrtle (made it) easier to write about the tragedies that happened in the residential school," she said.

The title of the new book refers to the genocide that occurred in the residential school system.

"That was the government's (intention,) to kill the Indian in the child," she said.

"What I wanted for this book is to take people on a journey and to be left with hope," she said.

In an interview, Fox talked about her experience at the Lebret residential school where she was taken in the mid-60s when she was seven years old.

"I was so excited to go to school," said Fox. "I (thought) I was going to meet the Queen in my young child mind. The first day was when I first got hit. I was told to change."

Fox endured years of abuse at the residential school. She witnessed different forms of abuse on others as well as herself.

"I'm hoping readers can learn... what it was like to be in residential school. For those who attended the residential schools, I hope this book can provide some healing. Even with the younger generations, this book can help form an understanding as to why their parents or grandparents don't want to talk about their experiences at residential school."

The book has received good reviews. People tell her that after reading the book they cried, laughed, were angry and happy. Fox says the book is trau-

matic yet incorporates humour.

"What I wanted for this book is to take people on a journey and (for them) to be left with hope," she said.

Orange Shirt Day has a lot of meaning for her because of her own experience.

"We were given an orange before bed," she said. "There were many times I went to bed without that orange. I wasn't allowed to eat supper or have an orange as a form of punishment. That was a big significance for me when I think of Orange Shirt Day" she said.

Fox survived residential school, though others did not, she says.

"I think to myself 'I'm still here.' I have children and grandchildren... some didn't make it out of residential schools," she said.

Fox holds a Master's Degree in Administration Leadership from the University of Regina and is currently working towards a PhD.



Author Bevann Fox released a fictional book on residential schools based on her experiences. She wears an orange shirt on September 30 to remember what she survived and to remember those who didn't make it out of residential schools alive. Photo supplied

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Impact Assessment Agency of Canada / Agence d'évaluation d'impact du Canada

Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project

Public Comments Invited

What is happening?

September 21, 2020 — The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) has accepted an initial project description for the proposed Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project, located near Unity, Saskatchewan.

The Agency invites the public and Indigenous groups to review the summary of the initial project description and provide feedback related to the proposed project. Comments received will support the Agency in the preparation of a summary of issues. Once completed, the Agency will provide the summary of issues to the proponent.

The Agency recognizes it is more challenging to undertake meaningful public engagement and Indigenous consultation in light of the circumstances arising from COVID-19. The Agency continues to assess the situation with key stakeholders, make adjustments to consultation activities, and is providing flexibility as needed in order to prioritize the health and safety of all Canadians, while maintaining its duty to conduct meaningful engagement with interested groups.

How can I participate?

Comments can be submitted online by visiting the project home page on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry (reference number 80998). All comments received will be published online as part of the project file. For more information on the project, the review process and alternative means of submitting comments, visit the Agency's website at canada.ca/iaac.

Written comments in either official language will be accepted **until October 21, 2020**.

To view the summary of the initial project description online, visit the Agency's website at canada.ca/iaac. Printed copies are available upon request.

Virtual Information Sessions

The Agency invites the public and Indigenous groups to attend one of the virtual information sessions that will take place during the comment period. The Agency will be sharing information on the impact assessment process and the project in order to assist participants with their review and formulation of comments on the summary of the initial project description.

October 8, 2020 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. CST (Session 1) & 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. CST (Session 2)

More information on how to attend the virtual information sessions is available by contacting the Agency at IAAC.NorthWest.AEIC@canada.ca or 587-357-6484.

Will there be more opportunities to participate?

This is the first federal comment period for the project. If the Agency determines a federal impact assessment is required, the public and Indigenous groups will have additional opportunities to participate over the course of the impact assessment process.

Stay updated by following the Agency on Twitter: @IAAC_AEIC #NorthWestTerminal

What is the proposed project?

Great Sandhills Railway Ltd. is proposing to expand the existing North West Terminal, a grain handling facility located one kilometre east of Unity, Saskatchewan and serviced by the Canadian National Railway (CN) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP). As proposed, the Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project would include three loop tracks, two shop tracks, a wye track, and a repair shop. The new tracks would reduce congestion on the mainline by allowing CN and CP to enter and depart the yard on alternative tracks. The new tracks would also allow for the interchange of over 175 train cars at a time, increase capacity on the Edmonton corridor, and create a space for the mechanical inspection or repurposing of trains and rail cars.

For more information on the Agency's privacy policies, consult the Privacy Notice on its website at canada.ca/iaac.

Canada

Prince Albert monument to honour MMIWG

By **Brendan Mayer**
for *Eagle Feather News*

A new monument honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) will be installed on the riverbank in Prince Albert next spring.

The Sisters in Spirit monument, which will depict a mother and child, was designed by artist Lionel Peyachew of Red Pheasant Cree Nation, who also designed the MMIWG statue outside Saskatoon's police station.

Organizers made the announcement at a sod-turning event on October 1.

"We're doing this for those families... missing their loved ones," said Brian Hardlotte, Grand Chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC).

"This monument will be a place of comfort... It's important to have it in a place where it's visible. You can see all the vehicles driving by. When they come across that bridge they will see this site. This will be a sacred spot," he said.

The PAGC secured federal funding for the monument in response to the 2019 national inquiry into MMIWG, whose final report called the violence upon Indigenous women and girls in Canada a genocide.

"All the mothers and all the sisters that we have lost, and the grandmothers, that's a story that needs to be told over and over again."

Families are calling on PAGC, the Women's Commission and the police to ensure the files are kept open and active, Hardlotte said.

"When there's a missing person, there is no closure, he said.

Deputy Chief of Police Jason Stonechild agreed.

"We will never close a file if we don't know what the conclusion is. We owe that to the family and the victim that can't speak for themselves. It's important that we do the best job that we can."

"Our mothers are the foundation of life," PAGC Vice-Chief Christopher



Prince Albert Grand Council Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte (left) and Vice Chief Christopher Jobb (right) at a sod-turning ceremony for a future monument to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls on October 1, 2020. Photo by Brendan Mayer

Jobb said. "When you lose a loved one, especially a female, there's so much life that is lost. That foundation is no longer there. It's up to the aunties and grandmothers to hold that foundation when we lose a loved one. All the mothers and all the sisters that we have lost, and the grandmothers, that's a story that needs to be told over and over again."

PAGC Women's Commission chair Shirley Henderson said the space, with its surrounding benches, will be used for events like the annual Honouring Our Brothers and Sisters Memorial Walk.

This year's event was postponed, probably until May of next year, Henderson said.

"We promised each other that we will walk twice as far next year. We look forward to seeing everyone back here in May."



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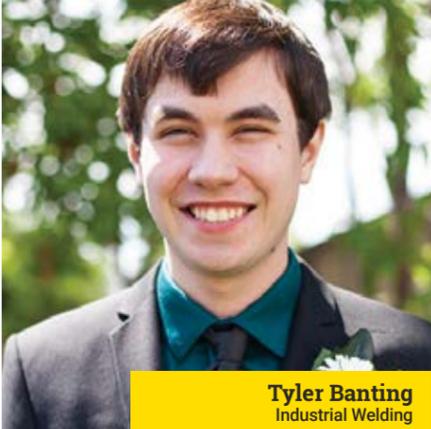
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Lacey Alcrow Bachelor of Science, Nursing	Joseph Desjarlais Bachelor of Science, Anatomy & Cell Biology	Aron McKay Practical Nursing Diploma
		
Tyler Banting Industrial Welding	Jayde DesRoches Bachelor of Science	Isabella Ruiz-Sepulveda Bachelor of Science
		
Jared Crane Bachelor of Education	Lauren Fox Bachelor of Science	Janelle Smith Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Q&A with Marion Crowe - CEO First Nations Health Managers Association

Marion Crowe, a citizen of Piapot First Nation, was the founding Executive Director and now Chief Executive Officer of the First Nations Health Managers Association. With Covid-19 sweeping our country, Marion and the folks at the First Nations Health Managers Association have been hosting weekly Facebook Live seminars for health workers on reserves across Canada. We are impressed by her passion and sent her a few questions about herself and career to help introduce her important work to the rest of Saskatchewan. Enjoy

How did you get into the health management field?

My career in health management started with a summer student posting at Health Canada, Medical Services Branch, now known as Indigenous Services Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch. For our younger readers, stay positive, you never know where life will take you! I was pushing a mail cart and working in Finance in my humble beginnings. I worked in the Federal Government, all in Indigenous Health in: Finance, Administration, Policy, health services accreditation, e-health in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and Ottawa Headquarters. This is where I learned about health human resources and found my journey and home in health leadership administration with the First Nations Health Managers Association. I was with the Federal government on an Interchange Agreement to support the building of this organization as the Founding Executive Director. As the current Chief Executive Officer, I have never looked back. I am home here with this FNHMA Family.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your career?

The most rewarding aspect of my career is in working with nations and communities to support quality and equitable health services across turtle island. I have seen many nations and have learned the stories of resiliency, challenges and heartbreak. The commitment, dedication and honour in serving. There are so many amazing leaders who are humbly serving their populations with grit and heart. Seeing the success in others and supporting them in finding their voices and inspiring confidence is the most amazing part of my job! I once called a health director to tell them they have achieved certification through FNHMA. It was a Friday at 4:00 before the long weekend, the health directors later admitted that they didn't want to pick up that call, could only be bad news... as I began to tell them the good news the person started to cry. I knew right then and there that I was home. This person needed that news. This person was recognized amongst their peers and obtained

a national certification by us and for us. These are the moments I remember when I am having a bad day or tired. That is why I love what I am privileged and honoured to do.

What are the main things we can do as a community to improve our health outcomes?

There are many things a nation can do to improve our health outcomes. From my perspective, we have to prepare for the evolution of health services to our own control. Prepare and enhance leaders with the competencies, skills and abilities to lead our own organizations. We can prepare health and wellness plans, know the social determinants of health and how they contribute to our nations. Celebrate our own inherent knowledge while balancing management principles. Weave our First Nations values, teachings and culture into all aspects of program delivery and governance. While doing so we need to remember to incorporate our leaders of tomorrow and recognize the wisdom of yesterday to shape better tomorrows.

Who are your role models and why?

Growing up in the Federal government gave me access to many role models, I look to my family leaders, I look to people like Dr. Valerie Gideon who is an amazing trailblazer in Indigenous health leadership. Women like Carol Hopkins and Brenda Restoule.... Those making impacts at the community level and nationally. Women who have owned their spaces at leadership tables and have spent their lives dedicated to supporting wellness! Women who are inspiring, challenge you to grow, do better and who give their lives to serve. I hold up and celebrate all the other First Nations leaders who serve and thank them for their generosity, knowledge and commitment. And to all the other health managers and directors, I thank you for your commitment to take the journey with FNHMA in achieving your certification.



Marion Crowe, Chief Executive Officer of the First Nations Health Managers Association. Photo supplied



First Nations Health Managers Association

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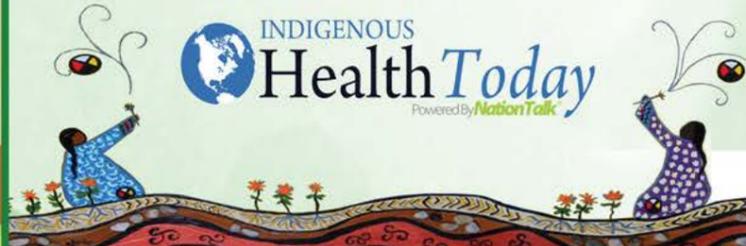
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Tsannie-Burseth honoured for Indigenous languages and culture advocacy

By Jeanelle Mandes
of Eagle Feather News

Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth's 33-year career of promoting Indigenous languages and culture in education is being recognized with the University of Regina Professional Achievement Award.

"It's quite humbling and I'm honoured to have received this," she said. "It was exciting. I thought 'really?' and I was smiling away. It was a happy moment for me because it's a prestigious award."

Since 1987, Tsannie-Burseth has been an educator. Her area of expertise and where she considers herself an advocate is for Indigenous languages and culture. She was a leader in education for 30 years as a teacher and principal.

Tsannie-Burseth has served as the Director of Education at Hatchet Lake First Nation and was the Chief of her community of Wollaston Lake. For the past 11 years, she has served as the Associate Director with the Prince Albert Grand Council.

Her work ethic and love for education has caught the attention of other selection committees in the past too. She has received the Governor General's Citizenship Award, the Awasis Award, the Role Model Award, Women of the Dawn Award, and the Lieutenant Governor's Award.

Currently, Tsannie-Burseth is a full-time PhD student at the U of R where she is focused on language and culture with the elder's guidance to build a curriculum that promotes language, culture and history. She expects to complete her doctorate within two years.

"Teaching and working with teachers in administration, with this whole reconciliation that is happening right now, we need to reconcile with our language and culture," she said.

"We need to have that curriculum in our schools for language and culture, which is very important, especially when a community is struggling with identity. We need to take back our teachings."

Her passion for teaching is something she truly holds dear to her heart.

"I've always loved teaching since day one. It's such a reward that you can influence life of children," she said. "I felt that when you build a trust with children, they can do absolutely anything. They will learn because of that positive relationship."

She urges students to never give up on learning.

"Never lose sight of your goals and vision," she said. "Do the best that you're capable of doing. Keep an open mind to learn because there is so much knowledge."

"As a Dene person, I didn't realize... that I learned so much of the Dene history right from contact to now. So education is a lifelong commitment."

U of R officials hope to present Tsannie-Burseth with the award in person at a gala in February 2021.



Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth, 2020 recipient of the University of Regina's Professional Achievement Award.

Photo submitted by Tsannie-Burseth

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Peter Ballantyne member first Indigenous president of Canadian Bar Association

By **Brendan Mayer**
for *Eagle Feather News*

The first Indigenous lawyer to become president of the Canadian Bar Association (CBA), says his mentor, Senator Murray Sinclair, taught him a lot about the law. And acting.

Brad Regehr, who is a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, started his year long tenure with the top job at the 124-year-old organization on September 1.

"I'm humbled that the association had the confidence to elect me," Regehr said. "I feel honoured."

"The Canadian Bar Association is lucky to have him," said Senator Murray Sinclair, one of Regehr's role models. "He is a very talented and intelligent guy."

Regehr originally wanted to be a firefighter but said he couldn't because



Brad Regehr is the first Indigenous president of the Canadian Bar Association in its 124-year history. Photo submitted

of his inadequate eyesight. He was inspired to become a lawyer after reading the law school application test booklet while attending the University of Waterloo (UW).

"Law just seemed to be the perfect fit for me," Regehr said.

He was at the University of Manitoba law school when he met Sinclair, the first Indigenous judge appointed in Manitoba and the second Indigenous judge in the country, who was lecturing there.

Regehr said Sinclair has been one of the most influential people in his life and has taught him a lot about law.

"When you know that something you are doing is affecting someone else, you are more careful and more conscious of the fact that you're going to have an influence on somebody's life," Sinclair said. "I'm quite humbled knowing that Brad has been motivated by some of the things that I've done."

They got to know each other over many years when they were both involved in at least eight seasons of the Lawyers Play, an annual fundraising production put on by the Manitoba Bar Association (MBA) and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (RMTTC) in Winnipeg.

One of the plays they were both in was *Fiddler on the Roof*.

"We found it very demanding but energizing," Sinclair said.

"He's a better actor than I am," Regehr said.

Regehr has been practicing law for more than 20 years and has been a

partner at Maurice Law in Winnipeg since 2017.

"He does mainly Indigenous law work with Indigenous clients," Sinclair said. "He has been a very strong advocate for First Nations. He's advocated for more prosperity and economic activities."

As president of the CBA, Regehr is now its spokesperson in Canada and internationally. The association represents approximately 36,000 judges, lawyers, notaries, law teachers and students in the country.

"When you know that something you are doing is affecting someone else, you are more careful and more conscious of the fact that you're going to have an influence on somebody's life,"

"Normally the president would have traveled across the country and to some international locations," Regehr said. "Member engagement is going to be challenging because of the COVID-19 pandemic."

One of his main priorities is to advance the work of the association's Truth and Reconciliation initiative, which promotes Indigenous culture, increases awareness about residential schools and supports anti-racism training.

Regehr was born in Winnipeg and is a Sixties Scoop survivor. He was adopted by a non-Indigenous couple from Alberta. When he was an adult, his adoptive mother helped him find his biological mother Yvonne Bear (later Yvonne Aldcraft).

"I was one of the lucky ones because the family was loving," Regehr said. "I still do have questions about my identity."



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Teen Cree-speaking “icon” keeps the language awake

By Jeanelle Mandes
of Eagle Feather News

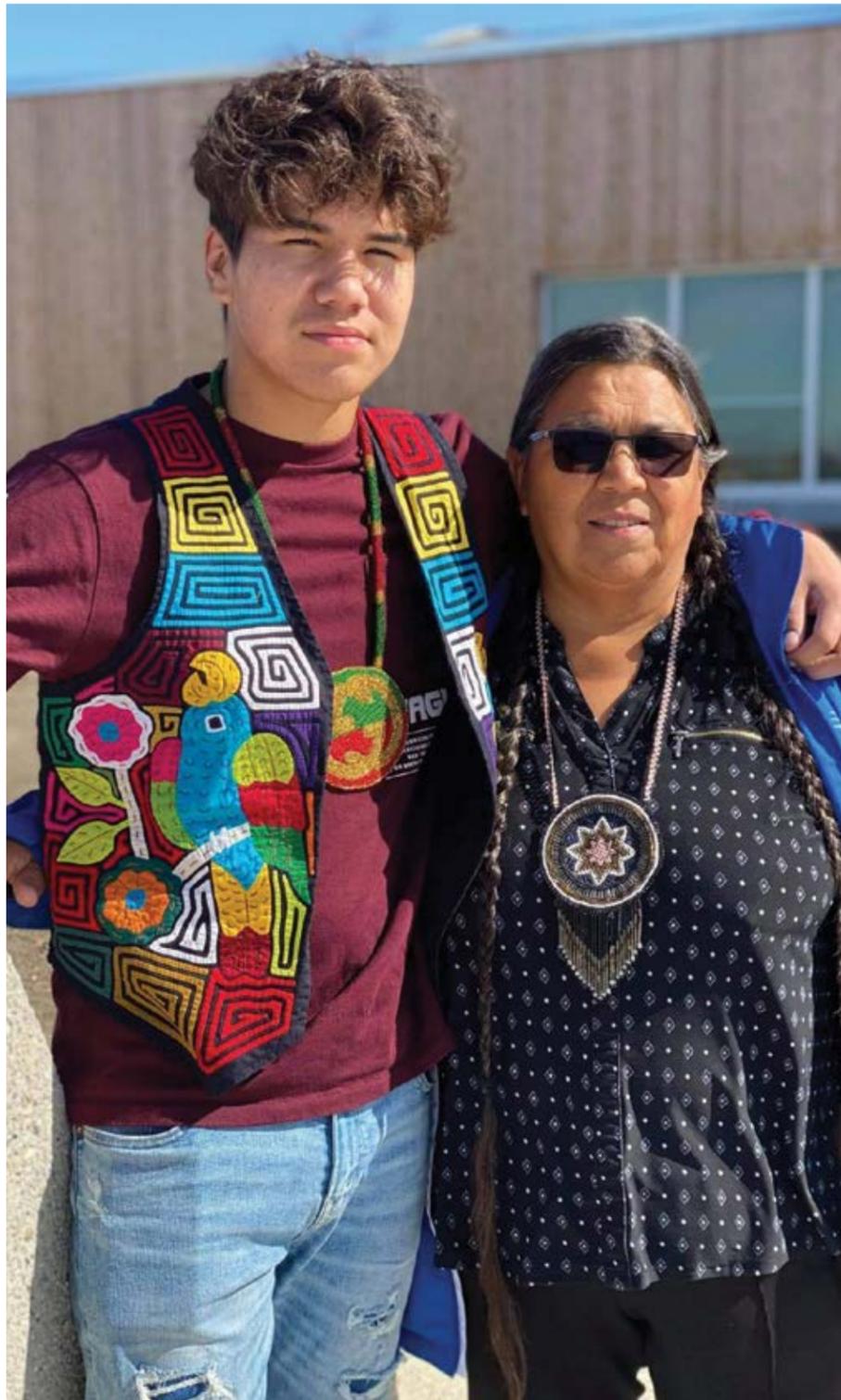
A young, fluent Cree speaker from Thunderchild First Nation speaks his first language to honour his grandfather, who was forbidden to speak his native tongue in residential school.

Davis Swindler, 17, was raised by his grandparents Ira and Maxwell and grew up only speaking Cree. Ira recorded a video of him when he was 8 years old speaking Cree to his grandpa. Many years later, that video was uploaded to Facebook and it went viral.

“I got a lot of responses from that video,” Swindler said. “People would message my grandma to ask for me to send voice clips... saying different Cree words. Eventually it got so big, that I started getting invited to schools across Canada. It got bigger than that and I started speaking at youth conferences.”

He was raised to live off the lands. At a young age, he became an avid hunter and would donate his hunt to local Elders. Eventually, his Grandma Ira knew that he would need other tools to survive in both worlds.

“My grandma would teach me some English words every day,” he said. “My grandpa didn’t really like it but she had to convince him that I wouldn’t succeed without the white man’s language.”



Davis Swindler and his grandma Ira create various Cree videos where they speak to each other only in Cree. Photo submitted by Ira Swindler

Maxwell is a residential school survivor and was beaten for speaking his language, but that pushed him to speak his language even more, Ira said.

“He always proclaims that they beat the language into him instead of out of him,” she said. “This is how we raised Davis. Our home consisted of everyone speaking Cree.”

She told her grandson, “our language isn’t lost, it’s merely sleeping. We need to wake it up.”

“I hear him talking about the sacredness of our language. I tell him, ‘when you speak our language, you’re closer to the Creator because our language has a spirit and it is sacred,’” she said.

Ira and her husband are proud of the man Davis is becoming and they know they did a great job raising him.

“I’m saddened that he’s becoming an icon (for speaking) the language when we should all be speaking it,” she said. “But I am also very proud of him. Kids need to hear that positive enforcement and we can’t always concentrate on the wrongs they do.”

Another Cree speaker, Aaron Checkosis from Poundmaker Cree Nation, recognized Swindler in a parking lot and made a recording of himself interviewing Checkosis in Cree.

“I asked Davis why is it that our young ones are not speaking Cree? He said, ‘they are not trying. They have to keep trying.’

“He said ‘our language is not gone. It’s still there, it’s sleeping...it’s not too late to speak your language.’

“Davis made me proud when I first saw his video that he did with his moshom, when they were speaking fluent Cree to each other when he was a young boy. It’s not every day we see young ones speaking our language,” Checkosis said.

Swindler also speaks Cree around his friends and peers at school.

“I try to encourage my peers to learn the language,” said Swindler. “So far, hanging out with me is doing them a favor. They are picking up on the Cree language.”

Swindler hopes to have a career as an architect or a doctor one day but will always keep that traditional balance in his life.

“I want to encourage others to keep trying to learn your languages and never let them be forgotten,” he said.



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Wakpa Mckay scores big RBC student award

By Jeanelle Mandes
of Eagle Feather News

A young man from Fort Qu'Appelle with many achievements under his belt is one of 20 Indigenous students across Canada that won this year's RBC Indigenous Student Awards Program where he will be given \$5,000 for each year of his studies.

Wakpa Mckay was surprised when he learned he would be financially set for the next four years at the University of Regina.

"I felt really relieved and I was also super happy when I found out that I won," said Mckay, who is currently taking a pre-law course. "I am very thankful to RBC. Without that, I don't think I'd be as nearly as successful as I am now with my university studies."

"I needed a new laptop. So, I used some of that money to buy a new one for online university classes," he said.

A committee of Indigenous academics and RBC representatives select the award recipients based on personal and academic achievements and individual financial need.

"Indigenous youth have bold ideas that can create a new way forward for their communities, for Canada, and it is important that we find ways to help bring those ideas to life."

Mckay was the 2019-2020 president of the Student Leadership Council at Bert Fox Community High School in Fort Qu'Appelle.

"(It) really helped me to build connections within the community," he said.

Mckay participated in Saskatchewan's first Provincial Youth Council last October and the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets for five years. For the past three years, he has traveled throughout Saskatchewan to facilitate the Kairos Blanket Exercise, which gives a visual presentation of historic European contact with Turtle Island.

This year's winners of the RBC Indigenous Student Awards Program were announced on September 17.

"By doubling the number of scholarships and increasing the amount for each award, we are acting on our promise to Indigenous youth to provide access to education and opportunity," said Dale Sturges, National Director, RBC Indigenous Financial Services in the prepared statement.

"Indigenous youth have bold ideas that can create a new way forward for their communities, for Canada, and it is important that we find ways to help bring those ideas to life."

In 2015, RBC signed a Declaration of Action in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

"Indigenous youth continue to face so many barriers to education – these scholarships are one way we can help remove some of those barriers, create more equality and help ensure Indigenous knowledge and perspectives flourish," Sturges said.

For the full list of this year's winners, and more information about the RBC Indigenous Student Awards and how to apply, please visit <http://aboriginalstudents.ca/site-sponsors/rbc/>.



Wakpa Mckay from Fort Qu'Appelle is a recipient of the \$20,000 RBC Indigenous Student Awards Program. Photo submitted by Wakpa Mckay

BHP

BHP would like to congratulate Ken Smith, former Manager Corporate Affairs for Potash, on being elected Grand Chief of the Gwich'in Tribal Council in the Northwest Territories.



He will be missed but we know he will do great things for his community!

Reconciliation Ally: Braden brings skills to support Indigenous vision

By Julia Peterson
for Eagle Feather News

When Janice Braden thinks about her commitment to reconciliation, she goes back to her earliest memories.

"I grew up in rural Saskatchewan," she said. "I was a farm kid and, early in my life, I had close friendships with Indigenous friends and got to know them and their families. I saw they were just like my family, but the world often didn't treat them the same way.

"As I realized the world would often treat Indigenous people unfairly, I think it became a theme that this was part of the work of a lifetime for me."

This commitment has carried through her life and career. From 1997 to 2000, she worked in Nunavut, launching a magazine for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. Then she went to Ottawa to work as a senior policy analyst for Indian Affairs, where she worked on the processes leading up to the 2005 Kelowna Accord.

"(I saw) how often Indigenous people have stuck their neck out to trust and have faith in governments to be able to move forward on initiatives," she recalled.

"That trust is a precious thing. And so, every time I read one of these things where the government hasn't fully met its promises, I think, 'governments come and go, but Indigenous groups have been seeing this record for a long time.' We need to have greater respect for them."

"When you're working as an ally with an organization, you get to bring your skills and your knowledge to it, but you have to ensure that the lead and the vision is coming from Indigenous people," she said.

"Time and again, it's proven that Indigenous people have a stronger, better, bolder sense of what needs to be done... So that vision really has to be set by them."

Morgan Hare, Executive Director at First Light Friendship Centre in Saint John's, Newfoundland, is one of Braden's longtime friends - they met in Ottawa, and he remembers her passion and drive.

"I find Janice is a very strong advocate of furthering Indigenous reconciliation across Canada," he said. "Her keen interest remains to hold the Federal Government accountable for the injustices to Indigenous peoples."

"When you're working as an ally with an organization, you get to bring your skills and your knowledge to it, but you have to ensure that the lead and the vision is coming from Indigenous people,"

Since returning to Saskatchewan, Braden has worked for Métis electoral reform commission, as well as the original inter-sectoral commission in Saskatoon, which brought together leaders from different social-related agencies in the city.

"They hired me to examine what could be done to reduce poverty in Saskatoon," she recalled. "And one project we took on was the plan to end homelessness. I worked with 20 different agencies in the city to create the Housing First initiative, which has been rolled out in several cities."

She now manages a research network in primary care at the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine.



Photo caption: Janice Braden manages a research network in primary care at the UofS College of Medicine Photo by Addison Braden

Impact Assessment Agency of Canada Agence d'évaluation d'impact du Canada

Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project Participant Funding Available

October 1, 2020 — The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency) is making funding available to assist the participation of the public and Indigenous groups in the federal impact assessment for the proposed Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project, located near Unity, Saskatchewan.

Funding is available for eligible individuals and groups to assist their participation in the upcoming steps of the impact assessment's planning phase, specifically for reviewing and providing comments on the draft Tailored Impact Statement Guidelines and the draft Public Participation Plan. Once this phase is complete, the public and Indigenous groups will have another opportunity to apply for funding to assist their participation in the other phases of the impact assessment process.

Applications received **by October 29, 2020**, will be considered.

The Agency recognizes that it is more challenging to undertake meaningful public engagement and Indigenous consultation in light of the circumstances arising from COVID-19. The Agency continues to assess the situation with key stakeholders, make adjustments to consultation activities, and is providing flexibility as needed in order to prioritize the health and safety of all Canadians, while maintaining its duty to conduct meaningful engagement with interested groups.

As a next step, the Agency will determine whether a federal impact assessment is required for the project. If one is required, recipients and the amount of funding allocated will be posted at a later date on the project's webpage on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry website. If the Agency determines a federal impact assessment is not required, no funds will be allocated and there will be no further opportunity to apply for funding for this project.

To apply for funding, complete the Application Form for the Planning Phase available on the Agency's website at canada.ca/iaac under Funding Programs. For more information, contact the Participant Funding Program by writing to iaac.FP-PAF.aEIC@canada.ca, or by calling 1-866-582-1884.

Follow us on Twitter: @IAAC_AEIC #NorthWestTerminal

The Proposed Project

Great Sandhills Railway is proposing to expand the existing North West Terminal, a grain handling facility located one kilometre east of Unity, Saskatchewan and serviced by the Canadian National Railway (CN) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP). As proposed, the Great Sandhills Railway Switching Operation at North West Terminal Project would include three loop tracks, two shop tracks, a wye track, and a repair shop. The new tracks would reduce congestion on the mainline by allowing CN and CP to enter and depart the yard on alternative tracks. The new tracks would also allow for the interchange of over 175 train cars at a time, increase capacity on the Edmonton corridor, and create a space for the mechanical inspection or repurposing of trains and rail cars.

More information on this project is available on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry website, Registry reference number 80998.

Canada

Indigenous Writers' Mentorship Program



The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild is looking for **2 Mentors** and **2 Apprentices** for our 2021 Program. The mentor provides one-on-one instruction in the craft of creative writing and the apprentice receives guidance and support from an experienced writer.

Application Deadline is October 19, 2020.

Visit skwriter.com for details on how to apply.

