

The Purdy Crawford Chair

In Aboriginal Business Studies

Case Studies in Aboriginal Business

Indian Maiden Maple Syrup C

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Aboriginal Business Studies**

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The Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies was established at Cape Breton University in 2010 in response to Aboriginal community leaders' expression of the need for entrepreneurship, business investment, and corporate skills training for the purpose of creating a model of self-reliance.

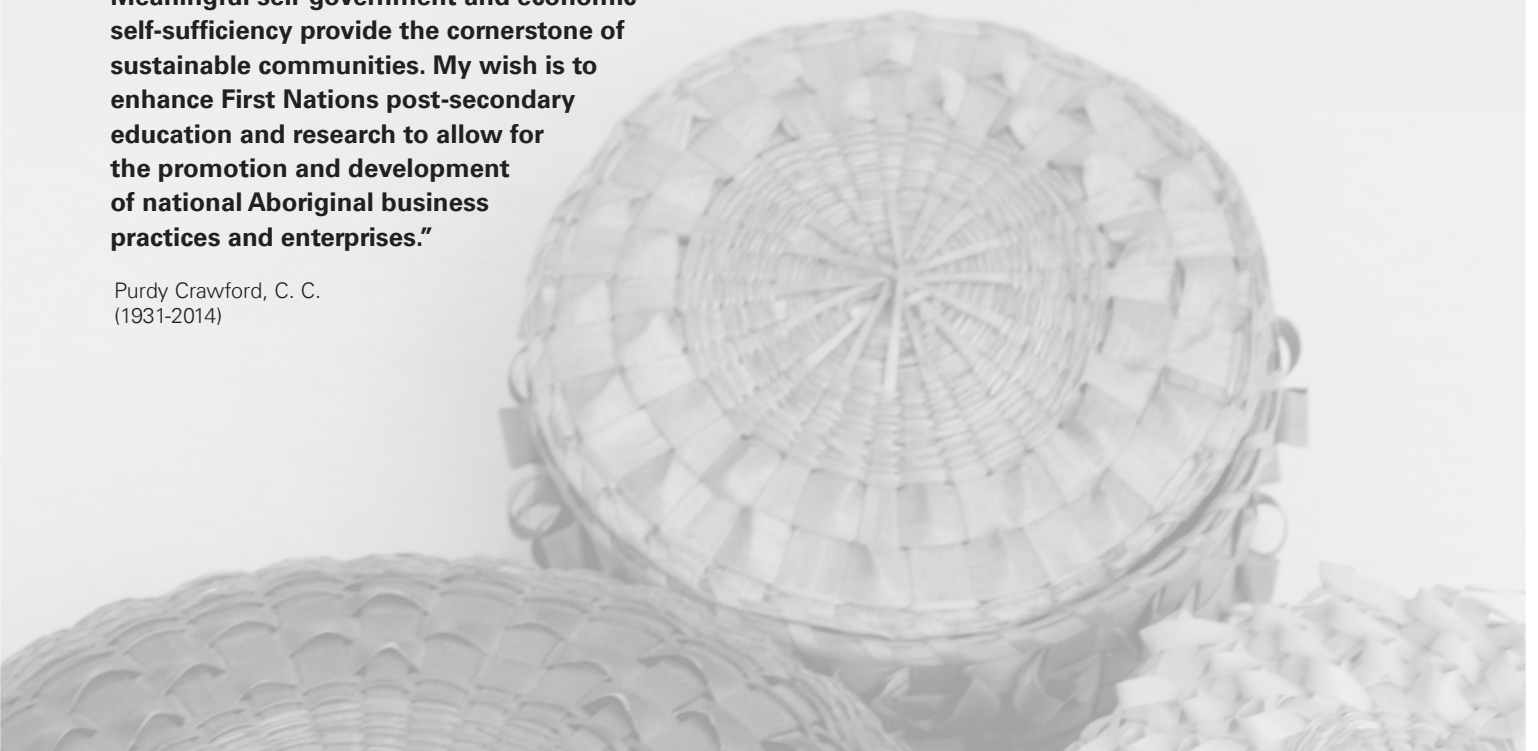
Named in honour of Canadian lawyer and corporate boardroom leader, the late Mr. Purdy Crawford, the Chair aims to promote interest among Canada's Aboriginal people in the study of business at the post-secondary level.

The Purdy Crawford Chair in Aboriginal Business Studies focuses its work in four areas:

- Research on what "drives" success in Aboriginal Business
- National student recruitment in the area of post-secondary Aboriginal business education
- Enhancement of the post-secondary Aboriginal business curriculum
- Mentorship at high school and post-secondary levels

"Meaningful self-government and economic self-sufficiency provide the cornerstone of sustainable communities. My wish is to enhance First Nations post-secondary education and research to allow for the promotion and development of national Aboriginal business practices and enterprises."

Purdy Crawford, C. C.
(1931-2014)



INDIAN MAIDEN MAPLE SYRUP C

In 2013, Mary Louise Bernard was thinking about the future of her award-winning brand Indian Maiden Maple Syrup. She had recently self-published a complementary bilingual book that told the story of how maple syrup was discovered. She wondered whether to incorporate a Mi'kmaw name or illustrations from the book into the syrup's future labelling.

BACKGROUND

Mary Louise Bernard, self-described as a lifestyle entrepreneur, made her first foray into Aboriginal business with Native Trail Tours in 2004. This product responded to a gap in the local market by providing an Aboriginal tourism offering that featured excursions to First Nation communities in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. As the guide, Mary Louise shared her own knowledge of Mi'kmaw culture and traditions with tourists, including many of the stories her mother had told her as a child, such as the legend of the Indian Maiden who gave maple syrup to First Nation peoples. When a tourist from Ontario asked her in 2005 where she could purchase the Indian Maiden maple syrup referenced in the legend, Mary Louise decided to develop the product herself. In the years that followed, Indian Maiden Maple Syrup was available locally at trade shows, craft fairs, and farmers' markets, as well as from her home in Wagmatcook and later Middle River, located directly on the Cabot Trail, a high-traffic tourist route.

THE INDIAN MAIDEN LEGEND

In Mi'kmaw culture, there is a legend that explains how maple syrup (known as *sismoq'napu*) was discovered. One year Grandfather went into the forest on a quest as he did every year. After he was gone longer than usual, the Indian maiden gathered her belongings and went after him. She found him sleeping in a shelter and saw his tomahawk piercing the trunk of a tree with water dripping from the handle into a hollowed log below. She prepared a meal for him using the water and when he awoke they ate together. She was confused by the sweet taste of the meal she had prepared, but Grandfather smiled and shared his vision with her. He then bestowed the name *Sismoqnapui'skwe'j* – Sweet Water Maiden – on her and from that day she prepared and shared sweet foods using the sap from the Maple tree.

INDIAN MAIDEN MAPLE SYRUP

The Indian Maiden legend was told to Mary Louise by her mother and she in turn shared it with her own children, as well as other friends and family. It served as the basis for her branding of a Cape Breton-produced maple syrup product. When she decided to act on the idea in 2005, she photographed her own daughter dressed in her regalia to serve as the “Indian Maiden.” She then brought the idea and the photograph of her daughter to a local consulting company, Vibe Creative Group, which designed labels and a product tag for the bottles of maple syrup. Mary Louise applied the labels to the bottles herself and tied the tags on with ribbon. The maple syrup sold locally for \$10/bottle.

In 2010, Mary Louise entered Indian Maiden Maple Syrup into the Dreamcatcher Foundation’s The Big Idea 2, a competition to find new Aboriginal products for the market. With her daughter Michelle Bernard dressed as the Indian Maiden, Mary Louise pitched her brand of maple syrup to a panel of judges in Hamilton, Ontario and won second prize (\$10,000). That same year, Mary Louise was named Woman Entrepreneur of the Year by Ulnooweg Development Group Inc., both for the Indian Maiden Maple Syrup product and her development of Buckskin Tales Tipi Camping in Middle River, Nova Scotia.

SISMOQNAPUI’S KWE’J: SWEET WATER MAIDEN

As Mary Louise continued selling her Indian Maiden Maple Syrup product and sharing the story of the Indian Maiden with customers, she realized that tourists didn’t just want to take the maple syrup home with them, but also the story of the Indian Maiden. The legend could not be reproduced in full on the label due to space restrictions and, after winning second place in the national contest, Mary Louise believed her mother’s story would make an excellent book. She decided to publish a children’s storybook that could be purchased as a complementary product. To maintain control of the finished product, Mary Louise self-published the book.

Given local Mi’kmaw language revitalization initiatives, the book also had a secondary market comprised of Mi’kmaw language learners throughout the Atlantic Provinces. As a result, her home band of Wagmatcook, the Mi’kmaq Association for Cultural Studies, the Nova Scotia Native Women’s Association, and Mi’kmaw Kina’matnewey (the Mi’kmaw education authority in Nova Scotia) invested in the production of the book. *Sismoqnapui’skwe’j: Sweet Water Maiden* was illustrated by her daughter, Ashley Dawn Bernard, and printed by City Printers in Sydney, Nova Scotia. The story was presented in both Mi’kmaq and English. The printed book was available locally for \$10/copy, while an eBook version was made available on the Chapters website for \$3.29. An elder was recorded reading the story in Mi’kmaq and the recording was made available free of charge on a complementary website.

CONCLUSION

Mary Louise Bernard had recently self-published the legend of how maple syrup was discovered as a complementary product for her award-winning brand Indian Maiden Maple Syrup when she began contemplating the future of the brand. She wondered whether to incorporate a Mi'kmaw name or illustrations from the book, published in 2013, into the syrup's future labelling.

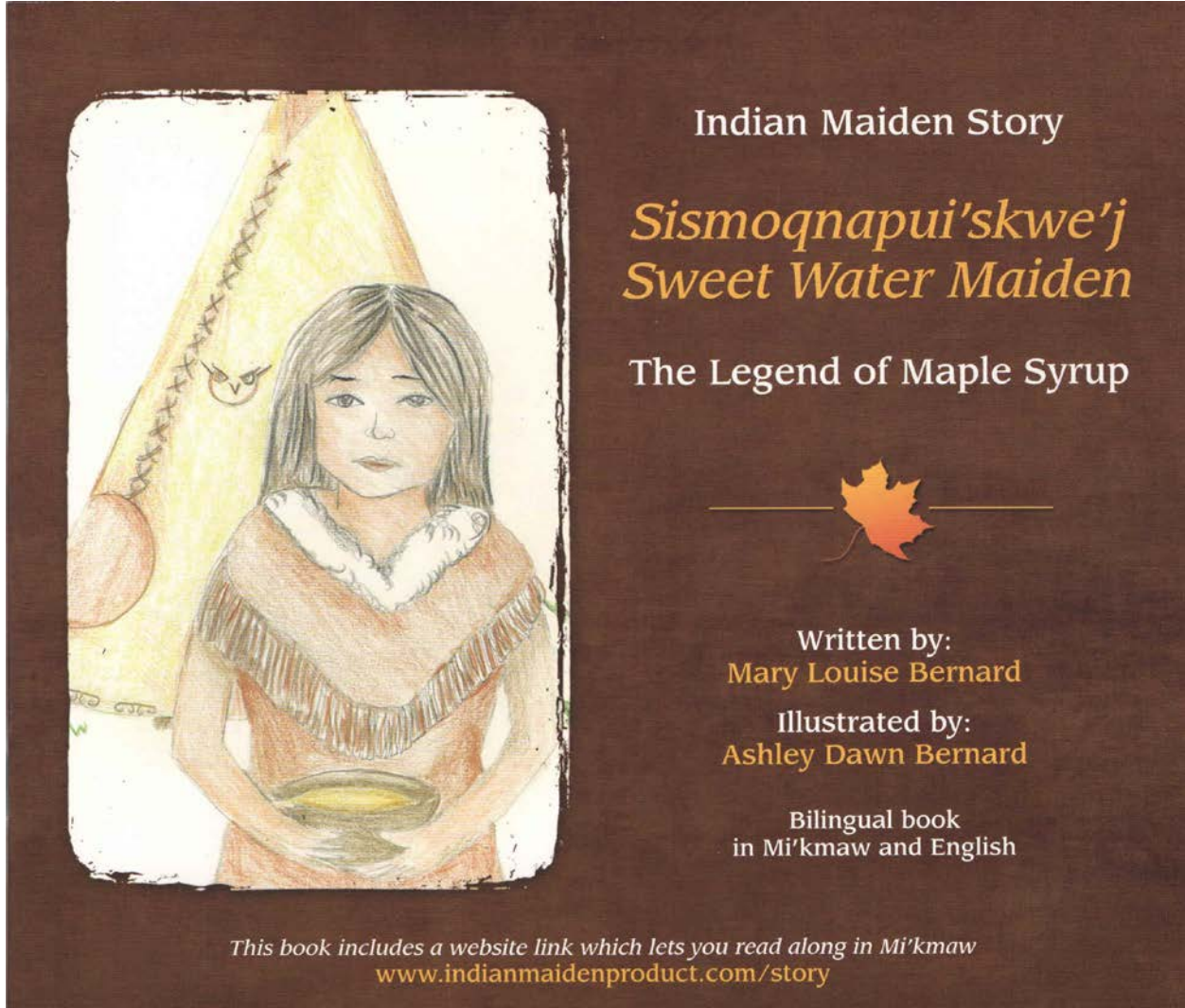
EXHIBIT 1
Indian Maiden Maple Syrup



EXHIBIT 2

Book Cover

Indian Maiden Story: Sismoqnapui'skwe'j by Mary Louise Bernard



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