

# The Purdy Crawford Chair

In Aboriginal Business Studies

## Case Studies in Aboriginal Business

Klahowya Village

Katie K. MacLeod



Cape  
Breton  
University  
Happen.

**Shannon School  
of Business**

**Purdy Crawford Chair in  
Aboriginal Business Studies**

Shannon School of Business  
Cape Breton University  
1250 Grand Lake Rd, Box 5300  
Sydney, NS B1P 6L2  
©2015

[www.cbu.ca/crawford](http://www.cbu.ca/crawford)

**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.**

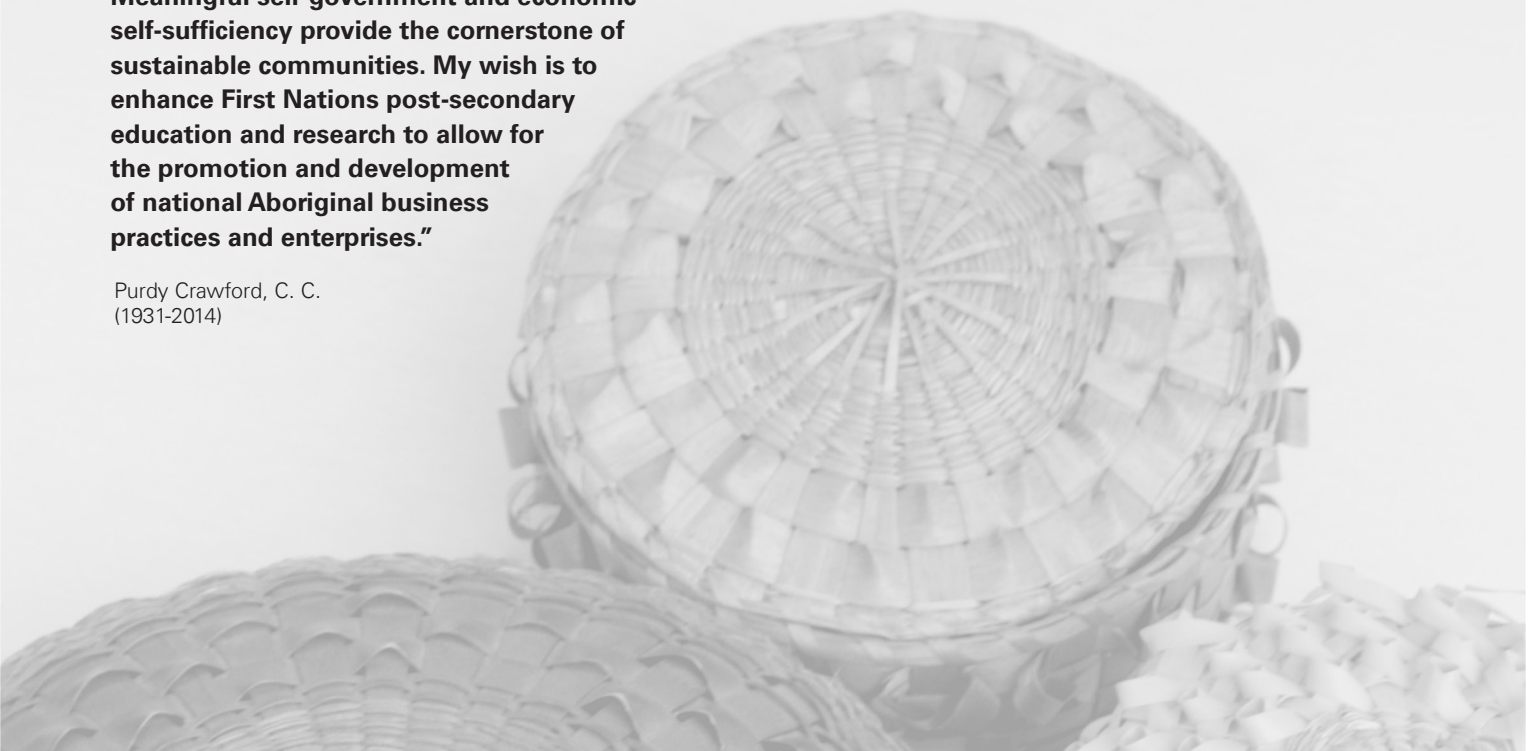
**Named in honour of Canadian lawyer and corporate boardroom leader, the late Mr. Purdy Crawford, the Chair aims to promote interest among Canada's Aboriginal people in the study of business at the post-secondary level.**

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)



## **KLAHOWYA VILLAGE**

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (AtBC) had been operating Klahowya Village in Stanley Park for four years in partnership with local Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil Waututh Nations. In 2014, AtBC wondered whether they should expand the tourism program to other areas of the province, providing more First Nations with an opportunity to engage in local cultural outreach.

### **ABORIGINAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Established in 1996, the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia is a non-profit organization that promotes and advances sustainable economic development of Aboriginal tourism in the province. Their work is based in principles of authenticity, respect, and a prosperous tourism industry. As part of its mandate to establish and promote market-ready Aboriginal tourism products, AtBC provides training, resources, and support to tourism operators and stakeholders. AtBC also plays a role in Aboriginal tourism advocacy.

The organization is centered on stakeholder-based operation. These stakeholders partner with AtBC and in return AtBC is able to provide their tourism-based businesses and operations with promotion, training and developmental tools, and, as part of their governance structure, involvement in decision-making regarding Aboriginal cultural tourism in the province. Their strategic priorities include advancing market-readiness, building and strengthening partnerships, expanding online marketing, targeting key and emerging markets, focusing on authenticity and quality assurance, and taking a regional approach.

### **KEITH HENRY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Keith Henry became the CEO of AtBC in 2008. He has a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan and has worked with various Aboriginal communities since receiving his degree in 1995. Keith is a Métis person originally from Manitoba and has engaged with the Métis Nation in various capacities, including his ongoing work with the Métis Nation of British Columbia since 2003.

The AtBC board of directors is comprised of seven directors at large, representatives from five regions of BC, a treasurer, a chair, and a co-chair. Each member of the board is Aboriginal and has extensive experience working in Aboriginal communities, businesses, and tourism, some of which are also stakeholders in AtBC.

## **VANCOUVER WINTER OLYMPICS**

In 2010, Vancouver, British Columbia hosted the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. The event lasted seventeen days and brought 2,566 athletes from 82 countries to the city. The event was covered by 10,000 media representatives and viewed by 3 billion people worldwide, and brought spectators from around the world. The games were hosted in Whistler and the greater Vancouver area, with the opening and closing ceremonies taking place in the city of Vancouver at BC Place. Events such as alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, biathlon, Nordic combined, ski jumping, bobsleigh, luge, and skeleton were held in Whistler, while curling, figure skating, ice hockey, sledge hockey, short-track speed skating, and wheelchair curling were held in Vancouver.

The Aboriginal Peoples of Canada were official partners of the Winter Olympic Games. The governments of the four host nations – Squamish, Musqueam, Lil'wat, and Tsleil Waututh – formed partnerships with the organizing committee and provided consultation on the planning and running of the Games. National organizations, such as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Métis National Council (MNC), and Inuit Tapitit Kanatami (ITK), also formed agreements and worked collaboratively with the organizing committee.

The planning committee of the Winter Olympic Games aimed to create and foster innovative opportunities that benefitted both the Olympics and local First Nations. The Aboriginal Peoples of Canada were represented proportionally within the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games. There was an effort to have representation from many First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities across the country. With the inclusion and participation of Aboriginal groups there were increased economic opportunities for growth and development in sports and cultural tourism within British Columbia during the Olympics and after the games came to an end.

## **KLAHOWYA VILLAGE AND TRAILBLAZERS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION TRAINING**

Following the Games, AtBC wanted to ensure that interest in Aboriginal cultures and growth in Aboriginal businesses continued beyond the Olympic Games. The games resulted in the creation of new Aboriginal businesses and jobs, and increased tourism. It is estimated that the Games created \$59 million in economic opportunities for Aboriginal businesses in BC. To maintain and build upon the economic prosperity created through Aboriginal cultural tourism in Vancouver Klahowya Village was established.

Klahowya Village was located in Stanley Park in Vancouver and intended to provide an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience. Klahowya is a Chinook word meaning welcome. The village was designed to give visitors a taste of Aboriginal culture and

tourism, and served as a gateway initiative that would allow AtBC to generate employment opportunities and build tourism capacity across BC. The village showcased Aboriginal people and businesses from across BC and featured arts, crafts, storytelling, guided tours of the park, music, and dance. A themed miniature railroad, with a spirit catcher train, travelled through the village.

Klahowya village operated during tourism season, usually between mid-May and early September. The village provided a venue to market the tourism products and services offered by AtBC stakeholders. By employing youth guides and artisans, it helped develop tourism capacity. It also promoted overall awareness of local First Nations and provided members of these Nations with skills to implement cultural programming, engage with tourists, and be more competitive within the tourism industry. With the success of Klahowya Village, AtBC hoped to create 250 new jobs over three years in order to allow Aboriginal people to participate in the growing tourism industry.

An important component of Klahowya Village was the Trailblazers Cultural Interpretation Training program, which provided AtBC employees and stakeholders with training in the skills required to work in the tourism industry. The program featured units titled Aboriginal Peoples (Pre-Contact, Contact, Clash of Cultures, Where are We Now?); My Nation, My Ancestors, Myself; Traditional Languages; Tourism Guidelines and Protocols; Cultural Interpretation (Creation Stories, Stories and Songs, Talking Circle); Demonstration and Field Trips; and Community Cultural Tour Development. When Klahowya Village opened in 2010, AtBC hired 40 employees, most of whom were graduates of or students in the Trailblazers program. The training program was especially appealing to Aboriginal youth, who were able to gain summer employment with Klahowya Village. By the end of 2010, all employees had successfully completed the program and many Trailblazers went on to further study or gain employment in the tourism industry.

The village provided not only industry experience, but also a chance for youth to share their culture and serve as ambassadors for Aboriginal people in British Columbia, as well as their respective nations. In the 2010 season, the Klahowya Village staff consisted of 8 team leads and 32 village hosts. Although there were financial losses in the first year of operation, with revenues of \$516,454 and expenditures of \$816,957, the program was considered a success and continued operation. Between 2011 and 2014, the program was able to employ 15-20 local First Nation youth between the ages of 18 and 30 each year from Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil Waututh Nations. By 2014, the Village was operating at break-even, with revenues of \$178,970 and expenditures of \$178,970.

Between 2013 and 2014, AtBC replaced the Trailblazers Cultural Interpretation training program with a new program called Cultural Interpretation Training. This program included many components of the trailblazers program and aimed to be more accessible to communities. It was offered to both community members and new Aboriginal cultural tourism businesses.

## **A TRAVELING VILLAGE**

Though Klahowya Village was established in Stanley Park in 2010, it was initially conceived of as a mobile program. In 2014, AtBC was reconsidering the idea of moving the village outside of Vancouver and taking it on the road in order to benefit other First Nations and stakeholders in other parts of the province. Ultimately, the creation of a traveling village would allow the program to display a greater degree of diversity of Aboriginal culture and traditions, while reaching new local and tourist audiences. The travelling village would be more inclusive and build on the success of their pre-existing summer program at Klahowya Village over the last four years. As a mobile attraction, it would showcase Aboriginal cultures at already established festivals and events throughout the province.

If AtBC pursued the idea of replacing Klahowya Village with a travelling attraction, youth employment would likely decrease in the process. The travelling attraction, however, would allow AtBC funding to reach other nations beyond the greater Vancouver area and reflect their mandate as a provincial organization. If the travelling attraction was established as a complementary product for the existing village in Vancouver, it would maintain the already successful village and increase AtBC's reach throughout the province at the same time, but it could be difficult to fund both at once.

## **CONCLUSION**

In 2014, the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia was considering the possibility of operating a traveling Aboriginal cultural tourism village throughout the province. With a decline in revenues and employment opportunities at Klahowya Village in Vancouver, Keith Henry, CEO of AtBC, needed to decide whether to replace Klahowya Village with a travelling attraction or establish a travelling village as a complementary product.



# The Purdy Crawford Chair

In Aboriginal Business Studies

CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY  
**UNAMA'KI**  
COLLEGE 

Cape  
Breton  
University  
Happen.

**Shannon School  
of Business**