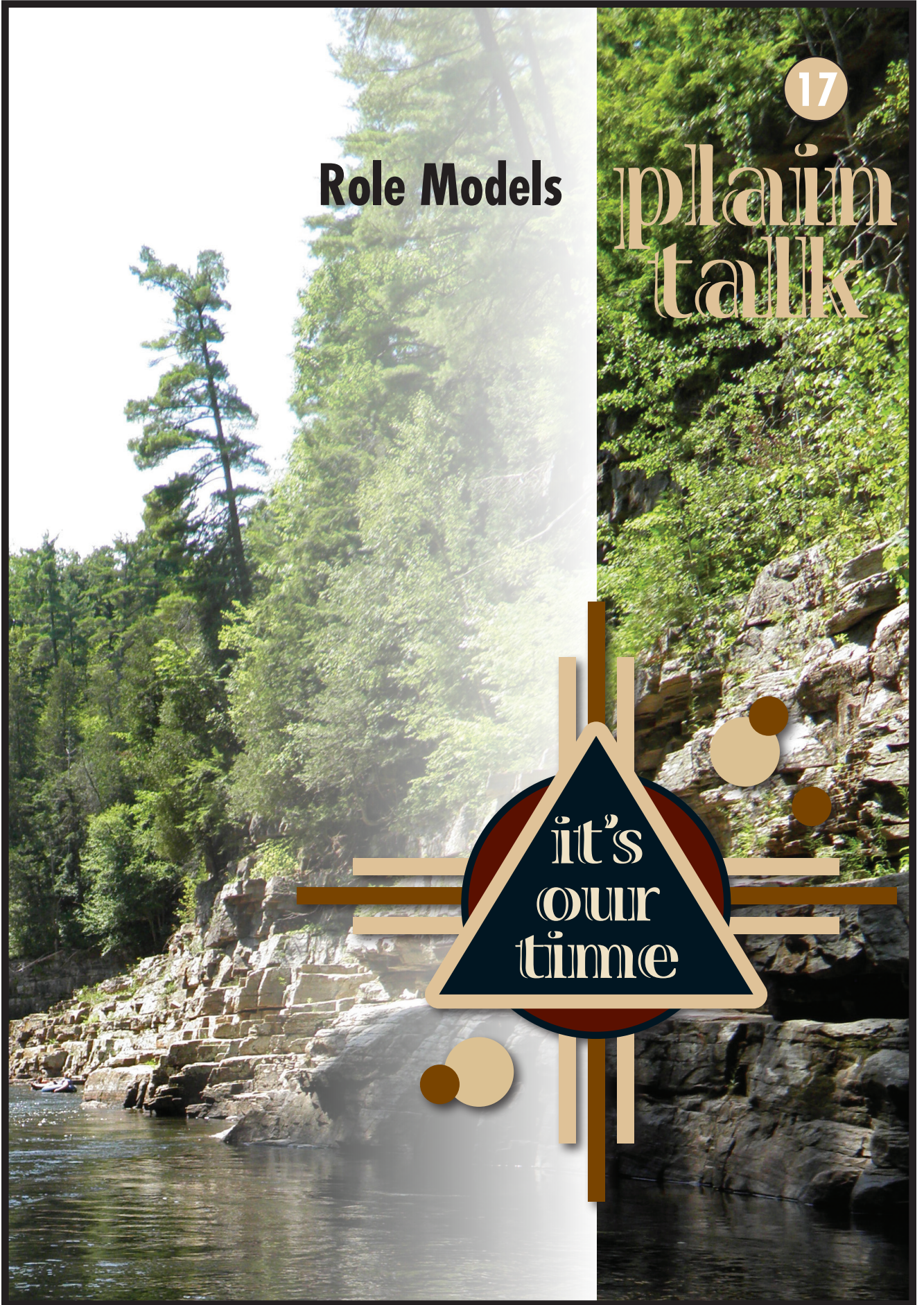


Role Models

17

plain
talk

it's
our
time



People are people. Some people are famous. Some people are not. Some people are nice and do good things. Some people do not. Some people soar. Some people struggle.

Some of these very people—the famous and the not so famous, the nice and the not so nice—those with wings and those without—some of these people are *Role Models*.

Role Models are people who are inspiring, admired and looked up to—people with exceptional personal characteristics. These personal characteristics cover a very broad range of behaviours, activities, attributes and beliefs, including:

- spiritual
- sense of values
- culturally connected
- creative
- artistic
- athletic
- compassionate
- giving
- achievement-oriented
- community-oriented
- committed to human rights
- hard-working
- competitive
- cooperative
- social consciousness
- career success
- songwriter
- famous

Role Models are complex people, with different mixes of personal characteristics.

Role Models can have powerful effects on us—as motivators, guides, examples, and energizers.

Role Models can give us the incentive and drive to develop our talents and abilities. They can give us the strength to face challenges, to carry burdens, to overcome obstacles. They give us the strength to keep going, the wings to dream big, and the confidence to aspire to more.

Everyone, not just young people, can have a Role Model. But one size does not fit all. Since we are all individuals, with different perspectives, attitudes and views, no single person is likely to be a role model for everyone.

There are many powerful First Nations men and women who are recognized as *Role Models*.



Some are listed in the following pages.



Adam Beach, Lake Manitoba First Nation, Manitoba

Adam Beach is an actor, producer and political activist who got his first major role in the 1992 film *Squanto* for Walt Disney Productions. Since then, his talents have earned him numerous roles on television and in major motion pictures including Clint Eastwood's *Flag of Our Fathers* and alongside Nicolas Cage in *Windtalkers*. More recently he received the Gemini Award for his work as co-host of the 18th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. In 2012 he starred in *Artic Air*, a new dramatic series for CBC. Adam Beach is committed to raising the profile of Indigenous Peoples through inspirational speaking engagements and his support of the many events he has hosted or been part of.



Grand Chief Edward John, Northern Dene, British Columbia

Grand Chief Edward John has dedicated his life to advocating for the rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples in the pursuit of social and economic justice across Canada and the world. He has been a leader in business, community development and politics. He acted as a member of the British Columbia Claims Task force, was a tribal chief of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Co-Chair of the North American Indigenous Peoples' Caucus and participated in the development of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Grand Chief John is a passionate leader who is instrumental in significant legal arguments involving Indigenous and treaty rights.



Cindy Blackstock, Gitksan Nation, British Columbia

Cindy Blackstock has worked in the field of child and family services for over 20 years. She is the Executive Director of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCS) Under her leadership, the Assembly of First Nations launched a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal against the Canadian Government on charges that it is racially discriminating against First Nations children and their families by providing less child welfare funding and benefits that other Canadian children receive. This case is one of the most formally watched legal actions in Canadian history with over 6300 individuals and organizations paying close attention. Jordan's Principal, an initiative to change policy so that First Nations children receive equitable funding for services received the formal support of over 3100 Canadians and organizations making it one of the most broadly supported children's policy movements in Canadian history. She is also part of a team supporting Shannen's Dream for equitable education.



Frederick G. Sasakamoose, Ahtahkakoop First Nation, Saskatchewan

Fred Sasakamoose became the first Aboriginal and Treaty Cree person to play for the National Hockey League (NHL) when he joined the Chicago Blackhawks in 1953-1954. His involvement in the NHL led toward the creation of recreational opportunities for children in his First Nation community of Ahtahkakoop but also across the province and the country. He became active in the promotion and development of sports

programs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth and organized and directed the *Fred Sasakamoose Hockey School*. He served on the National Hockey League's Ethnic Diversity Task Force where he helped advance the recreational opportunities for disadvantaged children. He was a Band Councilor on the Ahtahkakoop Reserve for 35 years and is currently employed as a Senator with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. He is an enthusiastic volunteer and chaperone, an Elder with the community school, and remains heavily involved in the community.

William Commanda, Algonquin, Quebec



Elder, shaman, prophesy holder, historian, environmentalist and master canoe maker William Commanda passed away in 2011 at the age of 97. Known by everyone as Grandfather, he is highly regarded in the Aboriginal community throughout Turtle Island and around the world. This revered Elder worked tirelessly to promote responsible environmental stewardship, racial harmony, and cultural understanding. One of his books, *Learning from a Kindergarten Dropout*, contains lessons and teachings for all of us. Grandfather Commanda has been honored for many outstanding achievements. He is acknowledged as a master canoe builder and built more than 75 birch bark canoes including one for Queen Margrethe of Denmark. He holds an honorary doctorate degree and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada. Some describe Grandfather Commanda as North America's Dalai Lama. His vision, for which he was a tireless advocate, is the creation of an Indigenous healing and peace-building centre on Victoria Island, the ancient meeting place of his ancestors in the national capital region of Canada.



Dr. Marie Ann Battiste, Mi'kmaq Potlo'tek First Nation in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Dr. Marie Ann Battiste is known as a change agent, a public intellectual, and a guru of education. A world-class scholar, she reached the summit of education, studying and teaching in some of the world's top universities. She is the author of books and essays that have inspired the renaissance of Indigenous education. She, along with a few others, set the foundation for Native studies in North America by developing courses that inspire respect for Indigenous knowledge, teachings, languages and heritage. Through all of her intellectual discourses and writings, it is the Mi'kmaq teachings that guided her own learning and achievements.



Norval Morrisseau, Ozaawaabiko-binesi, Ojibway Beardmore, Ontario

Also known as *Copper Thunderbird*, and as the *Picasso of the North*, Norval Morrisseau was a grand shaman and a great artist. His mission was always to instill pride in his people which he did by leading generations of aspiring artists to a world of powerful color and spirit embodied in the thousands of paintings he created over nearly 50 years. He has had major exhibitions across Canada and around the globe including the **Indians of Canada** pavilion at Expo 67, and the **Magicians of the Earth** exhibition in Paris in 1989. In 2006, he became the first First Nations artist to have a retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. He holds several honorary doctorates, is a recipient of the Canada Centennial Medal, a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art, and holds the Order of Canada. He was acknowledged as Grand Shaman of the Ojibwa in 1986.



plain talk 17



Reggie Leach, Ojibway, Beren's River First Nation, Manitoba

Playing 14 seasons in the NHL, Reggie Leach, the first First Nations player to reach super-star status, was a hockey hero in his day. Now, he is even a bigger champion for a generation that is too young to recall the right-winger's record-breaking games and legendary 115 mph slapshot. His achievements have inspired junior and amateur hockey players worldwide. He is in the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame and the Philadelphia Flyers Hall of Fame. Today Reggie teaches his skills to Aboriginal youth across Canada, speaks about his prolific NHL career and raises awareness about the harmful effects of alcoholism. He said: Success is not the result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire.



Taiaiake (Gerald) Alfred, Kaien'kehaka, Mohawks of Kahnawake, Quebec

In the academic world, few stand taller than Taiaiake Alfred. At 18, and interested in seeing the world, he joined the United States Marines and served tours of duty in Asia and Central America. Upon his return, he enrolled at Concordia University in Montreal and began an academic journey that eventually led him to Cornell University in New York where he completed his MA and PhD. A prolific author of hundreds of articles and three books on Indigenous governance—including the groundbreaking *Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto* (1999)—Mr. Alfred is the founding director of the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria, the world's first graduate program to offer an MA and a PhD in Indigenous Governance. Through his writing, lectures, community work and teaching Mr. Alfred continues to work for a brighter future for Indigenous peoples in Canada.



James (Sakej) Youngblood Henderson, Chickasaw/Cheyenne Nations, Saskatchewan

James (Sakej) Youngblood Henderson is a leading Aboriginal lawyer, statesman, and strategist. In 1974, he was one of the first American Indians to receive a Juris Doctorate in law from Harvard Law School. He is driven to see that Indigenous ways of life are represented in society. His work reflects his belief that Indigenous peoples need to step up and take their place in all institutions to ensure that their voices, aspirations, and wisdom are heard. He is a widely published and hugely respected author of books, scholarly articles, conference proceedings and technical reports. He was a key member of the team that drafted the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. He has served as an Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, a member of the Canadian Commission to UNESCO, on the International Commission of Jurists, and the UN Commission on Human Rights. Under his direction the Native Law Centre of Canada at the University of Saskatchewan has become a world-renowned legal research and legal studies centre.



Tina Keeper, Norway House Cree Nation, Winnipeg, Manitoba

You can't hear the phrase *North of 60* without thinking of Tina Keeper playing Lynx River's RCMP constable Michelle Kenidi. She was born in Northern Manitoba, grew up in Winnipeg, and graduated from the University of Manitoba. In 1982, her sister drafted her into helping with wardrobe for an Indigenous theatre group. This led to work as a stage manager and later to performing. After two minor film roles, she landed the lead

in *North of 60* and won a Gemini for Best Actress in 1994. She is committed to working various social issues including suicide prevention and violence against women. She has worked to build bridges between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the province of Manitoba. In 2006, she was elected to the House of Commons as the Liberal candidate from Churchill and served as the Official Opposition's Critic for Public Health, Canadian Heritage, and as Special Advisor for Aboriginal Outreach in the parliament that followed.



Chief Clarence Louie, Osoyoos Indian Band, British Columbia

Chief Louie understands that economic development is the way of the future. Since 1985, when he first became Chief, he has consistently emphasized economic development as the fundamental method for improving his people's standard of living. His Band has become a multi-faceted corporation that owns and manages numerous successful businesses including a golf course, a construction company that builds both on and off reserve commercial and residential projects, a forestry company, the largest privately owned vineyard in Canada, a convenience store, and a residential and agricultural leasing company. Under his leadership the band continues to increase its revenue, reduce its need for social assistance and see virtually zero unemployment. One of the band's largest projects has been its eco-tourism resort campground and RV Park. The cash flow generated from the businesses helps fund the Medication Fund, the Adult In-Home Care Program, a Recreation Complex, an Education Fund and a Patient Travel Fund. Ecology remains a high priority for Chief Louie with 890 acres set aside for water quality, fish and wildlife protection. Chief Louie has been recognized for his work with many honors and board memberships. He was profiled in Maclean's Magazine as one of 50 Canadians to Watch.



Basil Johnston, Anishinaabe, Wasauksing First Nation in Ontario

Basil Johnston is a strong proponent that the key to understanding culture is language. He is a highly respected author, storyteller and preserver of the Anishinaabe language. He has written 15 books in English and five in Ojibway, as well as numerous articles for newspapers, anthologies and periodicals. Mr. Johnston worked at the Royal Ontario Museum, taught high school history, lectured at universities and colleges and is a renowned storyteller. His best known book, *Indian School Days*, utilizes humor and poignancy to provide an accounting of his experience in the residential school system. Mr. Johnston has received many awards and honors including the Order of Ontario, the 125th Anniversary Medal and honorary doctorates from the University of Toronto and Laurentian University.



Robbie Robertson, Mohawk, Six Nations, Ontario

Robbie Robertson is one of the most influential musicians of our times. When legend Bob Dylan made the historic decision to synthesize folk and rock music, he turned to Robertson and The Band for backup. They toured the world in 1965-66 with Bob Dylan and recorded the legendary Basement Tapes. The Band released *Music From Big Pink*, featuring hits such as *The Weight* and *I Shall Be Released* and became a force. Robbie Robertson was the driving force behind the Martin Scorsese film *The Last Waltz*, The Band's 1976 farewell concert that was turned into one of the greatest rock movies of all time. As a solo artist, he began to explore his Indigenous roots as no other rock musician



plain talk 17

of his stature had done before. At the 2002 Olympic Winter Games opening ceremonies in Salt Lake City, Robertson brought Indigenous talent to the world by performing *The Stomp Dance* (Unity Song) for an audience of three billion people. "My education is my upbringing," he says of his Indigenous roots. *But basically I'm still just that kid from Six Nations who had a lot of big dreams.*



Elder Noel Knockwood, Mi`kmaq, Indian Brook First Nations, Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia

If you don't believe that a person can keep their Native language, follow their traditions and personify the richness of Indigenous spirituality while remaining a success in modern-day Canada, you haven't met Elder Noel Knockwood. In the 1970s, almost single-handedly he began the task of restoring and building the Native spiritual movement in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Elder Knockwood has now had Native Spirituality recognized as an official religion in Nova Scotia. He was involved in the Eagle Feather Project which introduced the use of the Eagle feather, in place of the Bible, to his province's judicial system. Later, he published a book on Native spirituality, *Mi`kmaq Teaching and Prayers*, which has been translated into German, Spanish and French and is available on the Internet. A university graduate, he changed the lives of generations of Nova Scotians after he developed the Transitional Year Program for Black and Indigenous students at Dalhousie University. He made history in 2000 when he became the first Indigenous Sergeant-at-Arms of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. A Korean War Veteran who saw 413 days of combat, he was recognized when he was asked to honor Ottawa's new Aboriginal Veterans' Memorial by performing the opening sacred prayer. Elder Noel Knockwood has shown the way to weave traditional Indigenous spirituality into an ever-changing modern world.



Tomson Highway, Cree, Barren Lands First Nation, Brochet, Manitoba

Multiple award winner, holder of the Order of Canada, Tomson Highway has shaped the development of Indigenous theatre in both Canada and around the world. His plays, including *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*, *The Rez Sisters*, *The Sage*, and *The Dancer and the Fool*, have been translated into numerous languages making them a window on Canada's Indigenous reality for the rest of the world. Highway has been writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto, University of British Columbia, and Concordia University. He has the distinction of being the librettist of the first Cree language opera, *The Journey or Pimootewin*. He helped establish Native Earth Performing Arts, Canada's first Indigenous theatre company and was artistic director for six years. In addition to his writing, he is also an accomplished musician. The proud son of a caribou hunter, who was born off a trap line in isolated northern Manitoba, Highway is trilingual, speaking French, English and Cree.



Dr. Allen Sapp, Cree, Red Pheasant First Nation, Saskatchewan

Allen Sapp says he simply painted. He was born just as the Great Depression dawned in 1929. He turned to painting early in life. "I just painted," he says. "I would get lonesome and I would draw some pictures. I did much schooling, but mostly I'd draw pictures. The teachers liked my pictures." In his 20s, he sold some of his work to North Battleford's Dr. Allan Gonor marking the beginning of his commercial success. In 1989 the Allen

Sapp Gallery Honor Collection opened in North Battleford in his honor. He received the Order of Canada and has been the subject of television documentaries and profiles by countless journalists. Along the way, Dr. Sapp has consistently spoken to youth, warning them of the dangers of drug and alcohol use. And, he's been a champion of the Native Heritage Foundation. Allen Sapp was the Lifetime Achievement recipient of the 1999 National Aboriginal Achievement Awards and in 2003, he received the Governor General's Award for English language children's illustration for the book, *The Song Within My Heart*.



Rose Marie "Tantoo" Cardinal, Métis, Anzac, Alberta

Tantoo Cardinal is one of the most renowned Indigenous actresses in the world. Probably best known for her role as Blackshawl in *Dances With Wolves*, she also appeared in many films and television series, including *Spirit Bay*, *Black Robe*, *Legends of the Fall*, *Smoke Signals* and *North of 60*. She infuses her characters with warmth and honesty. Her strength stems from her upbringing in her Métis culture. Ms. Cardinal moved to Edmonton to finish her high school education, where her ability to overcome racist taunts and other hardships in the unfamiliar city became the basis of the confidence and charm that she now exudes on stage and screen. In 2009, she became a Member of the Order of Canada. On August 23, 2011, she was one of many arrested while protesting the proposed extension of the Keystone Pipeline. Most recently, she performed the role of Regan in an all-Indigenous production of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Ms. Cardinal has amassed a long list of awards and holds an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the University of Rochester.



Daphne Odjig, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve, Manitoulin Island, Ontario

Daphne Odjig never expected to pursue a career as an artist, even though her talent was apparent even as a child. Now, her art is shown in museums, galleries and art collections throughout Canada and the world. It wasn't until the 1960s, with her pen and ink drawings of the Cree people of northern Manitoba, that the art world first took notice. Since then, she has had over 30 solo exhibitions and has been part of over 50 group exhibitions. Her work is in the collections of the Canada Council Art Bank, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Tom Thompson Gallery, McMichael Canadian Collection, and the Government of Israel. Ms. Odjig has received many honors including an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from Laurentian University, and an Honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of Toronto, and the Order of Canada.



Buffy Sainte-Marie, Cree, Piapot First Nation, Saskatchewan

Buffy Sainte-Marie is an Academy Award-winning singer and songwriter. In the 1960's, her music won international acclaim when her song *Universal Soldier* became an anthem of the peace movement. In 1964, she was named *Billboard Magazine's* Best New Artist of the Year. She won an Oscar for her song, *Up Where We Belong*. She has recorded 15 albums, and composed music for several films. Her song, *Until It's Time for You to Go*, has been recorded by more than 200 artists in 16 languages. Ms. Sainte-Marie



plain talk 17

earned a BEd, and later a PhD in Fine Arts, from the University of Massachusetts. She was a regular for five years on the television show, *Sesame Street* and was instrumental in creating a new Aboriginal music category for the Juno Awards. She received the Order of Canada, and was voted into the Juno Hall of Fame. She has a Juno, a Gemini, and holds Honorary degrees from the University of Regina, as well as the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Carleton University, Western University, Ontario College of Art & Design, and the University of British Columbia. She teaches art at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, and continues to work for her Nihewan Foundation for American Indian Education and the Cradleboard Teaching Project.



Bryan Trottier, Chippewa/Cree, Val Marie, Saskatchewan

Bryan Trottier's hockey statistics make him the 7th greatest player in the history of the National Hockey League with 1,279 games played, 524 goals scored, 901 career assists, 1,425 total points, and 912 penalty minutes. His records include most assists by a player in a career (twice); most games by a player in a career; most goals by a player in a game; and most points by a rookie in a season. Number 19 led the New York Islanders to four Stanley Cup titles from 1980 to 1983, and then won two more with the Pittsburgh Penguins. He is one of only four players in the NHL's history to have won more than one Stanley Cup with two teams. He won the King Clancy Memorial Trophy, the Conn Smythe Trophy, the Art Ross Trophy, the Hart Memorial Trophy, the Calder Memorial Trophy, and played in eight All-Star games. He also played in the 1979 Challenge Cup, and the 1982 and 1984 Canada Cups. He was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility in 1997.



Graham Greene, Oneida, Ohsweken Six Nations Reserve, Ontario

Graham Greene is a legend in the world of Indigenous theatre and movies. As a star with Kevin Costner in *Dances with Wolves*, Graham Greene got an Academy Award nomination, the adulation of millions of fans worldwide, and the acknowledgement that he is perhaps the world's best known Indigenous actor. He starred in Tomson Highway's acclaimed *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* and won a Dora Mavor Moore Award for his portrayal of the loveable Pierre St. Pierre. There was a period when he did odd jobs as he hitchhiked across Canada, and worked as a welder and iron-worker. Mr. Greene was selling t-shirts when the call came from Kevin Costner. Mr. Greene, as Kicking Bird, embodied all that is good in Indigenous life and experience. He also received rave reviews from critics and audiences for his roles in *Thunderheart*, *Die Hard 3* and *Maverick*, and *The Green Mile*. Most recently, he appeared in *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* as Harry Clearwater. Along the way, Mr. Greene has become a role model for all Indigenous peoples who aspire to a career on the stage and screen.



Rita Joe, Mi'kmaq, Whycomagh, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Known as the Poet Laureate of the Mi'kmaq people, her words describe who we are. To call her poetry thought provoking does not do it justice. Saying it expresses the pain and plight of Indigenous experience is not enough. These descriptions leave out the hope, beauty and understanding of the world she depicts and represents. Ms. Joe was in her 30s and the mother of eight when she discovered her knack for writing. Disturbed by Indigenous stereotypes that filled the books her children read, she took up a pen. *I am*

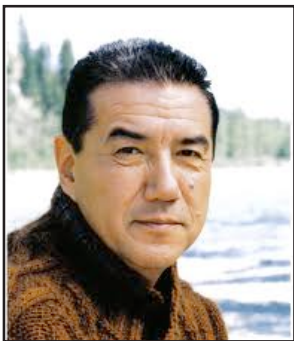
the Indian and the burden lies yet with me. People listened. Her books have met with resounding acclaim from both critical and general readers. A member of the Order of Canada, Ms. Joe is one of the few non-politicians ever called to the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, entitling her to be called *Honorable* for the rest of her days. The Honorable Rita Joe is truly the best of who we are.

Chief Billy Diamond, Cree, Waskaganish First Nation, Québec



It is hard to visit Northern Québec without being touched by the work of this Cree business and political leader. You can fly in on Air Creebec, the airline he founded; stay in a home built by the Cree Construction Company Limited, which he started; or drop by Cree Yamaha Motors to test-drive a boat. His world was bleak in the 1940s and 1950s. There was poverty, squalor and tar paper shacks. He was elected Chief in the 1970s, just in time to confront the Government of Québec over the James Bay Hydroelectric Project. He organized national and international media attention to spotlight the plight of the Cree and Inuit of the North; went to the United Nations to argue the Indigenous case; helped found the Grand Council of the Crees of Québec to assist in the battle, becoming its first Grand Chief; and was the prime Cree mover and signatory of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. As a result, the Cree people were awarded \$136 million in cash and investment infrastructure that has totaled more than \$1.4 billion. He has long been a leader in the development of Indigenous businesses, providing his people with an essential tool in reaching their goal of self-determination. In the 1980s, Chief Diamond negotiated with Ottawa on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations during the Constitutional talks. Along with a few others, he is largely credited for Section 35, which recognizes Aboriginal rights, finally being placed in the Constitution. A deeply spiritual man, and the subject of the best-selling biography, Chief Diamond has been presented with the Order of Québec and he received a 1997 National Aboriginal Achievement Award in business and commerce. When he died on September 30, 2010, the *Globe and Mail* said that he was a man who was quiet, but when he spoke, *he made Darth Vader sound like Pee-wee Herman and people listened.*

Tom Jackson, Métis, One Arrow Reserve, Batoche, Saskatchewan



Musician, actor, writer, producer, humanitarian, Tom Jackson touches lives. Hundreds of anonymous Canadians are grateful to him for homes and shelter, others for a warm meal and still others for the warmth and charisma he brings to television screens, concert halls and theatre stages. A former homeless person himself, he uses his life experience and the huge artistic profile he has attained to benefit the downtrodden and desperate. Estimates put the amount of money he has mobilized in donations to food banks at \$3.5 million. His annual production of the *Huron Carol* generates thousands to benefit Canada's hungry and homeless. He was nominated for a Gemini Award for his role as Peter Kenidi on CBC's *North of 60*. He appeared in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Grizzly Falls* and *Skinwalkers*. He is also a veteran of the folk music scene and a noted stage performer in *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing*. But Tom Jackson has never forgotten where he came from or the people who inhabit the fringes of Canadian society. His quiet, self-effacing manner and keen sense of humor underlie a spirit committed to the less fortunate. A big man with a big heart, Tom became a Canada 125 Medal recipient for his significant contribution to his fellow citizens, his community and to Canada. He is the Chancellor of Trent University and currently resides in Calgary, Alberta.



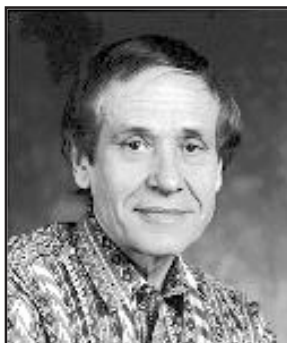
Elijah Harper, Cree, Red Sucker Lake First Nation, Manitoba

Quiet dignity. That's how Elijah Harper is perceived in the eyes of Canadians. When he uttered the firm and eloquent No that blocked the passage of the Meech Lake Accord in the Manitoba Legislature in 1990, he exemplified the growing political clout of First Nations across Canada. Eagle feather in hand, he cited the lack of adequate participation by Indigenous people in Canada's political process as his reason for blocking the accord. His efforts garnered him distinction and accolades including the Canadian Press Newsmaker of the Year Award and the Stanley Knowles Humanitarian Award. He became Chief of Red Sucker Lake First Nations at age 29. He was elected to the Manitoba Legislature in 1981 where he served for 11 years. In 1986, he was named to Cabinet as Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Native Affairs and in 1987 became Manitoba's Minister of Northern Affairs. In 1993, he assumed the national stage again when he was elected Liberal MP for Churchill, Canada's third largest riding. He currently sits on the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. He brought 3,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in Hull, Quebec in a Sacred Assembly in 1995 to find a spiritual process for resolving political problems. He received a National Aboriginal Achievement Award in Public Service. He was appointed Commissioner of the Indian Claims Commission in 1999, and remains in demand as a speaker.



Angela Chalmers, Birdtail Dakota Nation, Brandon, Manitoba

Angela Chalmers is an Olympic athlete who, through hours of training, perseverance and personal sacrifice, rose through the ranks of track and field to become one of the best in the world. She was a three-time Commonwealth Games gold medalist in the 1,500 and 3,000 meter events. In 1992, she won a Bronze Medal at the Barcelona Olympics in the 3,000 metres. She remains the only woman in the history of the Commonwealth Games to successfully defend the 3000 m race. A Canadian champion many years in a row, Ms. Chalmers is also an extraordinary role model for Indigenous youth, visiting reserves and speaking to young people. She grew up in both Nainimo, BC and Shilo, Manitoba and then accepted an athletic scholarship to attend Northern Arizona University where she earned All-American Honors eight times and was an NCAA cross country champion. She was inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame and Museum in 2001.



Douglas Cardinal, Meis/Blackfoot, Calgary, Alberta

Douglas Cardinal is credited with creating an Indigenous Canadian style of architecture with his curvilinear, organic buildings. His most significant Canadian architectural commission is the Canadian Museum of Civilization in the National Capital. He studied architecture at the University of British Columbia and the University of Texas where he graduated with honors. He established an early reputation with his designs for St. Mary's Church in Red Deer, the Grande Prairie Regional College, the Edmonton Space and Science Centre, the Government Services Centre in Ponoka and several other public buildings in Alberta. In addition to his commissions, he lectures and writes extensively on educational philosophy, computers, city planning, old age housing, public health and other subjects. His work has been exhibited throughout Canada and worldwide. He was hired by The Smithsonian Institution in 1993 as the Primary Design Architect for the National Museum of the American Indian but stopped work on the project in 1998. Douglas Cardinal is a figure for young people to aspire to and his contributions will always be remembered.



George Manuel, Shuswap, British Columbia

"At this point in our struggle for survival, the Indian peoples of North America are entitled to declare a victory. We have survived. If others have also prospered on our land, let it stand as a sign between us that the Mother Earth can be good to all her children without confusing one with another. It is a myth of European warfare that one man's victory requires another's defeat." (Fourth World: An Indian Reality by George Manuel and Michael Posluns, 1974).

George attended residential school and worked in the forest industry as a boom boss. His successful political career began with his term as Chief of the Shuswap people, a position that he held for seven years. In 1959, he became president of the North American Indian Brotherhood of BC. From 1970 to 1976, he was Chief of the National Indian Brotherhood (known today as the Assembly of First Nations). During his six years as president of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, he travelled all over the world to meet with the Indigenous people and their leaders. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada, and was repeatedly recognized for his international work with the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. He was instrumental in bringing about the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. George Manuel inspired others to work towards Indigenous control over Indigenous children, health, resources, government, but most importantly, he inspired us to take charge of our future regardless of the cost. George died on November 15, 1989, but his legacy lives on.



Levi General (Deskaheh), Cayuga, Grand River, Ontario

Levi General, known as Deskaheh, was a Haudenosaunee statesman noted for his persistent efforts to get recognition for his people. Raised and educated as a traditional Cayuga, he became hereditary chief of the Cayuga with the title Deskaheh. In 1923 he went to Geneva, Switzerland to speak at the League of Nations where he reminded European colonizers of their obligations under the two row wampum, the most significant pact made between the Iroquois and Europeans. In 1924, the RCMP dissolved the traditional government of the Six Nations, stealing important documents and wampums and declaring an immediate election to displace the traditional government. Soon thereafter, Deskaheh gave his famous last speech, during which he stated, *Over in Ottawa, they call that policy Indian Advancement. Over in Washington, they call it Assimilation. We who would be the helpless victims say it is tyranny. If this must go on to the bitter end, we would rather that you come with your guns and poison gases and get rid of us that way. Do it openly and above board.* Deskaheh died soon after and stands as a symbol for Indigenous people to stand up and speak for themselves.



Waubgeshig Rice, Anishinaabe, Wasauksing, Ontario

Waubgeshig Rice is a broadcast journalist and author. As a child, traditional Anishinaabe storytelling enthralled him and he began writing his own stories. At 17, he spent a year in Germany on a student exchange and writing reports on his experiences for newspapers back home gave him his first taste of journalism. He graduated from Ryerson University in 2002. Since then, his articles, essays and columns have been published in national newspapers and magazines. As a broadcast journalist, he has filed reports from across Canada, produced current affairs radio shows, and hosted and produced television features and documentaries for CBC. *Midnight Sweatlodge* is his debut collection of fiction, and was published in 2011 by Theytus Books.



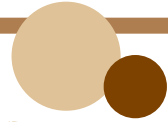
Mr. François Paulette, Dene Suline, Smith's Landing Treaty 8 First Nation, Northwest Territories

Francois Paulette became the youngest Chief in the Northwest Territories Indian Brotherhood. In 1972, along with other chiefs, he challenged the crown to recognize treaty and Aboriginal rights. He served on the National Indian Brotherhood Treaty Implementation Committee, the Assembly of First Nations Renewal Commission, and the Parks Canada Aboriginal Consultative Committee. Mr. Paulette was an outspoken advocate of treaty and Aboriginal rights during the Berger Inquiry into the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and in appearances before the National Energy Board. As Chief Negotiator for Smith's Landing First Nation, François drew on his negotiation skills training from the Harvard and Banff Schools of Management and worked diligently to conclude a Final Settlement Agreement in 2000. He continues to serve as a consultant and negotiator for other First Nations, notably the Łutsel k'e Dene First Nation as they participate in the creation of the Thaydene Nene National Park.



Shannen Koostachin, Attawapiskat First Nation, Ontario

Shannen Koostachin led a movement for safe and comfy schools and quality, culturally based education for First Nations children. She knew just how hard it was to learn in an on-reserve school that was chronically under resourced. The only elementary school for the 400 children in her community was closed because thousands of gallons of diesel fuel had contaminated the ground under the school. The federal government put portable trailers on the play ground of the contaminated school. They were meant to be temporary but nine years later there was still no sign of a new school. Shannen never went to class in a proper school. The portables became more and more run-down. When they'd finally had enough, the youth of Attawapiskat launched the Attawapiskat School Campaign to reach out to non-Indigenous children all across Canada to write to the federal government and demand a new school. Thousands of youth answered the call and three Ministers of Indian Affairs promised a new school and then broke their promises. The youth kept writing. When then Minister of Indian Affairs, Chuck Strahl, wrote in 2008 to say the federal government could not fund a new school, the grade 8 class cancelled their graduation trip to Niagara Falls and used the money to send three youth, including Shannen, to meet with Minister Strahl to demand a new school. When he said the government could not afford it, Shannen did not believe him and told him she would never give up because the younger children in her community deserve a proper school. Shannen spoke to thousands of people asking for their help to ensure every child got a good education and a comfy school. She was inspiring because she talked from the heart. She made a compelling speech at an education rights conference hosted by the children of Attawapiskat and attended by 500 other children at the University of Toronto in 2009. She was nominated, as an ambassador for all the children of Attawapiskat, for the International Children's Peace Prize given out by the Nobel Laureates. In May of 2010, Shannen Koostachin passed away in an automobile accident. With the support of her loving family, friends and community, *Shannen's Dream* is a campaign named in her memory to make sure all First Nations children across Canada have *safe and comfy schools* and receive a good quality education that makes them proud of who they are. *School should be a time for dreams. Every kid deserves this.*



Leela Gilday, Dene, Dene Nation, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

A captivating singer/songwriter, Leela Gilday is a passionate, soulful performer. Her lyrics embrace the essence of Dene life from an urban perspective. Leela Gilday has many national awards to her credit including a Juno, a Western Canadian Music Award, Best Music Video at the Dreamspeakers Festival and a Fellowship at the Banff Centre for the Arts. Touring has taken Leela from Tokyo to Toronto to Haida Gwaii. Performance highlights include the Winnipeg Folk Festival and Canada Day on Parliament Hill. She performs and tours with her band based out of Vancouver.



Waneek Horn-Miller, Mohawk, Kahnawake Mohawk Territory, Quebec

Waneek Horn-Miller has overcome discrimination, self-doubt, and an infamous incident of violence to emerge as one of North America's most inspiring Native speakers. *You have to figure out what it is that's the trigger for your motivation and recruit people into helping you, and, as well, get tough with yourself. Look in the mirror and say, 'I've had it with all the excuses. I want to make my dreams my reality, and I want to start today.* Young, frank, and hopeful, filled with purpose and poise, she works to mend the dysfunctional relationship between Native and non-Native communities through social and political change. She was stabbed with a bayonet by a Canadian soldier during the 1990 Oka crisis. She used this life changing experience to fuel her dreams of competing at the Olympics. Ten years later, the dream became a reality when she co-captained the Canadian Women's water polo team at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. This had her appearing on the cover of TIME magazine and beginning towards working on attracting Indigenous youth to higher education by building self-esteem and emphasizing a balance between education and sports. Waneek has traveled widely speaking about her experiences both in and out of sports. She is currently working with the Assembly of First Nations as the IndigenACTION Ambassador to develop a National Indigenous Sport, Fitness and Wellness Strategy. She is also the Coordinator of the First People's House at McGill University.



Romeo Saganash, Cree, Waswanipi, Quebec

In 1989 he became the first Cree to receive a law degree in Quebec. Fluent in English and French, his first language is Cree. Saganash served as deputy grand chief of the James Bay Cree of Northern Quebec from 1990 to 1993. Prior to his election, he served as director of governmental relations and international affairs for the Grand Council of Crees. He put his name in the running for the leadership of the NDP to succeed Jack Layton making him the first Aboriginal leader to run for the leadership of a major Canadian party.



John Kim Bell, Mohawk, Kahnawake Mohawk Territory, Quebec

John Kim Bell is a producer, conductor and composer. He became the first Indigenous person to ever conduct a symphony orchestra when he became Apprentice Conductor of the Toronto Symphony. Impassioned by the deplorable living conditions in Reserves across Canada, he has built what is now the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. He established the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards that celebrate career achievement in the Indigenous community. Now in its 21st year, the Foundation has awarded more than \$20 million

in scholarships to students and operates *Blueprint For The Future*, a national series of career fairs promoting career awareness for Indigenous youth. He produced, co-composed and directed the first-ever full scale Indigenous dance production, *In The Land Of Spirits* (1988), which premiered at the National Arts Centre. Mr. Bell is an Officer of the Order of Canada, holds the Order of Ontario, and has five honorary doctorates. He has served on the boards of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada, and the Canadian Health Institute for Health Research.



Thomas George “Tommy” Prince, Ojibw’e Nation, Brokenhead Reservation, Scanterbury, Manitoba

Tommy Prince died on November 25, 1977, but left his legacy as one of Canada’s most decorated First Nations soldiers, serving in World War II and the Korean War. Growing up, Prince was a superb marksman with exceptional tracking skills. He joined the army cadets as a teenager and volunteered for duty with an elite parachute unit. All members of this elite squad received intense instruction in stealth tactics, hand-to-hand combat, the use of explosives for demolition, amphibious warfare, rock climbing and mountain fighting, and as ski troops. Prince became a “Scout,” responsible for moving into forward positions and reporting on the movements of the enemy. In 1945, Sergeant Prince was summoned to Buckingham Palace where King George VI presented him with his Military Medal. He was one of 59 Canadians to receive the Silver Star during the war, and one of only three to receive the Military Medal. Tommy Prince was decorated nine times, the most of any Indigenous soldier in the war. In 1946 he was elected chairman of the Manitoba Indian Association. In August 1950, Prince re-enlisted in the Canadian Army to fight with the United Nations troops in the Korean War. Prince received the Korea Medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal and the United Nations Service Medal. Following the Korean Armistice Agreement, he remained in the army, working as an instructor of new recruits in Winnipeg, Manitoba, until his honorable discharge in 1953. But his personal life deteriorated and alcoholism overtook him resulting in his final years being spent virtually alone, living in a Salvation Army hostel. Sadly, in order to support himself, he sold off all his medals. His medals changed hands several times before coming up for auction when his nephew, Jim Bear, organized a pledge drive and purchased the medals, entrusting them to the Manitoba Museum.

Since his death, a number of honors have been bestowed in his name including:

Sgt. Tommy Prince Street in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Sgt Tommy Prince School in Scanterbury, Manitoba

The “Tommy Prince Barracks” at Canadian Forces Base, Petawawa, Ontario

The “Tommy Prince Drill Hall” Land Force Western Area Training Centre in Wainwright, Alberta

“Sergeant Tommy Prince Army Training Initiative” for Indigenous recruiting

The “Tommy Prince Award”: An Assembly of First Nations scholarship

The “Tommy Prince Scholarship” at Sault College, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

553 Sgt. Tommy Prince PPCLI Cadet Corps, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Tommy Prince Road in the Valour Park/Victoria Cross Park - a mixed-use development of Currie Barracks in Calgary, Alberta (2010)

Canadian actor Adam Beach would later portray the Canadian war hero in a movie about his life.

Resources

For More First Nations and other Indigenous Role Models visit:

- National Aboriginal Achievement Award Recipients: <http://indspire.ca/program/92>
- Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards: <http://aboriginalpeopleschoice.com/home/>
- Women of the Dawn Inc: <http://www.reginacity.com/fnac/index.htm>
- CBC 8th Fire: <http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/8thfire/index.html>
- APTN First Tracks: <http://www.aptn.ca/pages/firsttracks/>
- Art by and about Canada's First Peoples: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_groups/fp_groups_art.html
- The Players: <http://www.nativehockey.com/players/>
- Turtle Island Native Network: <http://www.turtleisland.org/culture/culture-music.htm>
- National Aboriginal Sport Circle- Google for regional Sites
- National Aboriginal Festival: http://www.canab.com/mainpages/events/archive_files/2004_cama_profiles/santeesmith.html
- Aboriginal Peoples Choice Music Awards: <http://aboriginalpeopleschoice.com/artists/nci-fm-the-spirit-of-manitoba/>
- Info for Tommy Price accessed from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tommy_Prince
- Info for Shannen Koostachin accessed from: <http://www.fncaringsociety.com/shannensdream/about-shannen>
- Info for Waneek Horn-Miller accessed from: <http://www.workingitouttogether.com/show/waneek> and <http://www.thelavinagency.com/speaker-waneek-horn-miller.html>
- Info for Romeo Saganash accessed from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romeo_Saganash
- Info for John Kim Bell accessed from: <http://johnkimbell.com/>
- Info for George Manuel accessed from: <http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/about/george.htm>
- Info for Deskaheh accessed from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deskaheh> and Google Images search: Deskaheh
- Waubgeshig Rice info accessed from: <http://www.waub.ca/midnightsweatlodge/>
- Info for Mr. Francois Paulette accessed from: <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=27&sn=62>
- Info for Leela Gilday accessed from: <http://leelagilday.com/#About>