



National Council for Reconciliation Board of Directors' biographies



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This publication is also available in French under the title: Biographies des membres du conseil d'administration du Conseil national de la réconciliation

Charlene Bearhead



Charlene Bearhead is an Alberta-based educator, Indigenous education advocate and author who has served Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, and Indigenous Peoples more broadly for over 30 years.

Bearhead has focused throughout her career on education as a tool for reconciliation, having worked to establish the National Indigenous Education and Reconciliation Network Gathering that has taken place in May since 2017.

Since 2019, Bearhead has served as the Vice-President of Learning and Reconciliation at the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, and has extensive experience in education and reconciliation at the regional, national and international level. She worked as the coordinator for Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation's first Residential School Survivor program in the 1990's, was the first Education Lead for both the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre at the University of British Columbia, and volunteered in the planning and delivery of children's and youth tracks of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide in Edmonton, Alberta, and New Mexico and Hawai'i, USA.

Édith Cloutier



Édith Cloutier, a member of the Anicinabe First Nation, has headed the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre since 1989. Under her leadership, the Centre has become a hub of innovative services for First Peoples. Ms. Cloutier is well known for her commitment to the well-being of urban Indigenous Peoples. She has served on numerous boards and committees at the local, provincial and national levels, bringing an urban perspective to issues affecting First Peoples.

Since 2017, she has been a member of the Transitional Committee established by the Government of Canada to ensure the creation of the National Council for Reconciliation in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Over the course of her career, she has received numerous awards, prizes and three honorary doctorates.

Mike DeGagné



Mike DeGagné is President & CEO of Indspire, an Indigenous national charity dedicated to supporting and investing in the education of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people across Turtle Island.

He previously served as the President and Vice-Chancellor of Nipissing University. In 1998, he became the founding Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, focusing on addressing the legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School System. He is also Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto Scarborough. He serves on several Boards of Directors, including the Global Centre for Pluralism, and the Four Pillars Society, and as a member of the Interim Board and Transitional Committee for the Establishment of the National Council for Reconciliation. With a Ph.D. from Michigan State University on Indigenous post-secondary success and master's degrees in law, education, and ethics, he has had a career addressing Indigenous health, residential schools, law, reconciliation, and governance.

He is a member of the Order of Canada, and the Order of Ontario, and has honorary doctorates from Dalhousie University, Ontario Tech University, and the University of Ottawa.

He is a citizen of Animakee Wa Zhing #37 First Nation.

Jonathan Dewar



Jonathan Dewar is a member of the Huron-Wendat Nation through his mother and maternal grandmother, with a PhD from the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies at Carleton University.

He currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer at the First Nations Information Governance Centre, a national organization that works with First Nations partners across the country to administer national surveys and research initiatives, deliver education and training, and advance data sovereignty through the national First Nations Data Governance Strategy.

Throughout his academic and professional career, Dewar's work has focused on truth, healing, and reconciliation, most notably as the Director of Research at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation; Director of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and Special Advisor to the President for the Residential Schools Legacy at Algoma University; and Director General and Vice President, Collections, Research, Exhibitions and Repatriation at the Canadian Museum of History.

Peter Dinsdale



Peter Dinsdale is a First Nations member of Curve Lake First Nation. He is the current President and Chief Executive Officer of YMCA Canada, and serves on boards of Wawanesa Insurance, the CSA Group and the Canadian Olympic Committee. Dinsdale has received extensive recognition for his work, including the Order of Ontario, and the Indspire Award for Public Service.

Dinsdale's professional career has been focused on addressing the impacts and legacies of the residential school system within Indigenous communities. He has worked with the Assembly of First Nations, National Association of Friendship Centres, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and worked to build education programs for street-involved youth at Native Child and Family Services of Toronto.

Peter Dinsdale has also served on multiple national boards of directors, including the First Nation Market Housing Fund and the Public Policy Forum. Dinsdale has been instrumental in advancing the Friendship Centre movement in Canada. He also authored and co-authored policy papers, including *Urban Aboriginal Communities in Canada: Complexities, Challenges, Opportunities*.

Joseph Murdoch-Flowers



Joseph Murdoch-Flowers is Inuk originally from Nunatsiavut and Nunavik, now living in Nunavut. He is an inter-generational Survivor of residential schools. A lawyer and a chef by training, he is the Co-Executive Director of Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre in Iqaluit and serves as the Ethics Officer for the Government of Nunavut. He has demonstrated experience in the field of reconciliation, with a sustained focus on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

He has worked closely with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, having co-developed a YouTube Based Project titled: "Read the TRC Report", and working as a legal counsel with the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. He has also worked as an advisor with the Canadian Bar Association's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force. His current work includes a focus on Inuit food sovereignty and increasing access to country food.

Mahalia Yakeleya Newmark



Mahalia Yakeleya Newmark is Tulít'a Dene First Nations, a mother, and intergenerational residential school Survivor from the Northwest Territories. She cares deeply about youth, families and contributing to Canadian society that is built on mutually respectful relationships. Yakeleya Newmark is a policy analyst and grassroots organizer with extensive experience in government, non-governmental and community-level organizing.

Building upon her strong educational foundation of a Master of Public Administration from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Denver, Yakeleya Newmark uses a reconciliation lens in her work, such as in leading an engagement strategy and co-writing the Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services Cultural Safety Action Plan. She has also researched and written reports on child and family services, homelessness prevention and youth suicide prevention with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action as a guiding framework. In 2020, Yakeleya Newmark co-founded *Strong People, Strong Communities*, a grassroots collective that engages Elders, knowledge keepers, youth and artists to create public murals in the Northwest Territories. More recently, she served as Ministerial Special Advisor to the Minister of Housing Northwest Territories and Status of Women for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Belinda Webb



Belinda Webb is Inuk from Nain, Nunatsiavut, and an intergenerational Survivor of Nain Boarding School. She currently works as Inuit Employment Coordinator for Vale Base Metals.

Webb has extensive and diverse management experience in both the private and public sectors, and at national, and regional levels including as the Deputy Minister of Language, Culture, and Tourism and the Director of Culture with the Nunatsiavut Government, and as an advisor for the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. She has also worked at the national level as Director of the Socio- Economic Development Department with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Webb has also held numerous committee positions, as well as on boards of directors, in a variety of disciplines and levels. This experience includes being a member of the Indigenous Cultural Heritage Committee for Parks Canada. She also served as the regional representative on the Inuit Guardians Committee, and the Inuit Crown Partnership Committee- Language Component while working with the Nunatsiavut Government.

Julie Ann Wriston



Julie Ann Wriston is a proud Métis woman from Saskatchewan. The mother of two inspiring children, Wriston has a vested interest in contributing to a healthy, sustainable Indigenous economy that provides an environment where opportunity, creativity and hope thrive.

Wriston spent the first decade of her career working directly with and for First Nations and Métis communities, building the foundations for community-owned development corporations focused on engaging in the energy and resource sectors. Much of her work has been anchored by Nation rebuilding principles and she has witnessed how authentic relationships, intentional investment and focused economic development strategies impact health and well-being in regions, communities and individuals.

Wriston is currently the Director of Indigenous Relations for Nutrien, and she has been a board member for provincial Crown Corporations, justice, arts, education, banking, and non-profit sectors. Wriston seeks to ensure that corporate Indigenous strategies reflect and respect the perspectives and realities of Indigenous People and is driven by the passion to ensure economic participation and contribution across all sectors as a powerful act of reconciliation.

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