

PROFILES OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATORS:
Footprints for the future



As part of the goals

and objectives of the Aboriginal Education and Employment Action Plan, the Aboriginal Education Directorate has developed Profiles of Aboriginal Educators: Footprints for the Future as a resource document for communities and schools to use to promote education as a career choice. The booklet captures the personal stories of some Aboriginal educators in the province of Manitoba, highlighting how they entered the field of education, their current positions and their words of encouragement to all learners.

The Aboriginal Education Directorate of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of all the educators and Elders who shared their stories for the creation of Profiles of Aboriginal Educators: Footprints for the Future. The Aboriginal Education Directorate would also like to thank Rebecca Chartrand for her contribution as project coordinator and editor.



MINISTER OF EDUCATION,
CITIZENSHIP AND YOUTH

Room 168
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
CANADA

MINISTER OF ADVANCED
EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Room 162
Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
CANADA

Re: Profiles of Aboriginal Educators: Footprints for the Future

Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to provide you with copies of the *Profiles of Aboriginal Educators: Footprints for the Future* which features Aboriginal educators working in various educational roles throughout the province of Manitoba. The profile book is an extension of the Aboriginal Educators Poster Series which highlighted educators in the roles of teachers, education administrators, post-secondary educators and elders.

The purpose of the profile book is to promote the field of education as a viable career choice among high school students. Students can reflect on the personal stories and words of encouragement provided by various Aboriginal educators working in Manitoba. Our appreciation is extended to all the Aboriginal role models who shared their inspirational stories for this valuable resource.

For further information or additional copies please contact the Aboriginal Education directorate at (204) 945-7886, toll free 1-800-282-8069, ext. 7886, or at aedinfo@gov.mb.ca.

Sincerely,

Honourable Peter Bjornson

Honourable Diane McGifford

Enclosure



PROFILES OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATORS:

Footprints for the Future





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HOME COMMUNITY

*Hollow Water First Nation,
Manitoba*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Anishinaabe

CURRENT POSITION

Reading Clinician/ Child Guidance Clinic

Elma Arthurson

Leaving the reserve

and my family was extremely difficult for me. Without family support and encouragement I don't think I would have made it. It took me three tries to leave the reserve before I finally stuck it out. My own son's personal struggles with reading have inspired me to pursue a reading clinician certificate. Today I enjoy working with students and collaborating with teachers within other disciplines at the clinic. I also enjoy learning about the diverse cultures within our school system.

I believe it is important for youth to pursue a career in education for many reasons. For one thing, we are the fastest growing population in Canada and I believe we need a more visible representation of Aboriginal people in all areas of mainstream society. As educators we help inform people about many things. More specifically, as Aboriginal educators we are able to share our truth. This truth will help create better spaces for our families and our people because it recognizes the many contributions we have made to the development and maintenance of this country. Overall, our increasing voice and presence in all aspects of society will help create better relations between us all in Canada.

“ Hold on to what you believe
and keep on dreaming.

”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education,
Brandon University. Special education
Certification, University of Manitoba
Masters of Education program at the
University of Manitoba-pending

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide leadership in the field of reading and literacy instruction. I conduct diagnostic clinical assessment and program intervention for students. I consult with and support students, teachers and parents, and provide professional development learning opportunities for teachers and parents.

Growing up within

the nucleus of a small First Nation community, unaware of the existence of a larger world outside its realms, I am amazed at the extensiveness of my world now. Little did I know how far the educational experiences would take me. Initially, like all challenges that continually face us, it was a struggle; but with hard work and perseverance, I was able to adapt to, and excel, in attaining the education that would lead to the various experiences which brought personal fulfillment and purpose into my life. I also realized that the knowledge and values that I learned from living in a community, surrounded by relatives and amidst the beauty of nature, were traditional forms of education that would complement my pursuit of higher education.

Graduating from high school was the beginning of this educational journey, and it was also the hardest one to complete. Although I had quit several times, I was able to go back and try again. When I finally walked down that aisle to get that grade-twelve diploma, I remember seeing the proud faces of my parents, relatives, and teachers and my self-esteem soared to new heights that day. I also felt grateful that they had not given up on me, even during the rebellious phases of my youth.

After graduation, I spent time raising a family and staying home with them. I quickly realized that there were limited opportunities for jobs on the reserve. The hardest part was turning to meager social assistance, which kept me in a cycle of poverty and low self-esteem. When the opportunity arose to acquire a Bachelor of Education degree, it became the key that would open many doors to the larger world. Again, the struggles and challenges seemed insurmountable at times and the urge to quit was as strong as it was trying to find the time to balance my home and school life.



HOME COMMUNITY

*Hollow Water First Nation,
Manitoba*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Anishinaabe

CURRENT POSITION

*Aboriginal Language Consultant,
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth*

Wanda Barker

After I achieved my first grade of A, it became my personal goal to set my academic expectations that high. This drive to excel was important for me, but it was also inspirational for the others in my group. It dawned on me that being a helper was a role that had been placed on me, and to this day that role has expanded in many ways. I was able to understand the importance of roles and responsibilities, and the intrinsic drive to find a purpose in life had been passed on to me by my parents, grandparents, and my relatives. Finding out my spirit name and that I was from the bear clan, were also significant revelations which helped me understand myself and my path in life.

I have found that experiencing life is one of the best ways of learning. All aspects of life are educational as learning takes place in various ways. I have also concluded that the more we experience things, both good and bad, the more we learn about ourselves. If there were no obstacles and struggles in our path, we would not develop the knowledge, attitude and skills to overcome them and allow that inner strength and courage to grow. Sometimes I think I have learned the most from the worst experiences in my life.

Take the time to think about your gift, your special talent or skill, and work on how you can develop it.

The teachings of the medicine wheel have also been part of my educational experience. The need to address the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of self is important for balance in your life. The more education and learning experiences I have acquired, the more I have become aware of myself and my potential. Each of us has been given a gift to utilize and share with others. Through education, we become aware of those gifts we have and, once we know them, we can begin using them to shape our future. One of my gifts is being able to speak and teach the Anishinaabemowin language. The realization that I had this precious asset has directed my path in the last decade. I have consolidated all my learning experiences in the various communities and organizations that I

have worked for in the last few decades to provide a foundation of knowledge and skills to help me carry out the duties of my current position.

A holistic education requires the need to address all the aspects of the medicine wheel. I have found that focusing solely on the mental aspect of education was not enough to make me feel whole. I felt that something was missing from my life. In the course of my travels to various communities and cultural ceremonies, I have been given additional knowledge that you cannot find in books or schools. I have found many teachers out there. Our Elders and our “keepers of knowledge” are our PhD’s. They carry the teachings of our ancestors and have great wisdom to impart. I have realized what an Elder once told me, “in order to help others, you first have to know and heal yourself.” Once you get to know yourself, through the honest examination of your life experiences, and you want to make positive changes, you have begun the healing process, nurturing the emotional and spiritual parts of self as well.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I am glad that I was able to reach out to others and ask for help, support and guidance. Finding someone who will listen to you so you can talk about your feelings and experiences is crucial. I am thankful for the people who have been, and have become a part of this holistic journey, because it has allowed me to do things that are necessary for learning and growing. Now I am able to focus on utilizing my gifts and pursuing my dreams and purpose in life, and I am glad that I am on the path of “Mino-bimaadiziwin”. (The Good Life) So take the time to know yourself and your culture. A holistic education is very important and teachings can come through various people and in different forms. Take the time to think about your gift, your special talent or skill, and work on how you can develop it. Work on one goal at a time, and once you achieve that one, start another one. As I reach for and attain a personal goal, I find that new ones have taken shape, and my need for further education again arises. The pursuit of life-long learning has become a part of my life. I am currently working on acquiring a Master’s Degree in Aboriginal Education, Governance, and Leadership. Do not be afraid to dream. Dreams come to us for a reason. Dreams can come true!

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education;
Project Management Specialist

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Aboriginal Language Consultant for Manitoba



HOME COMMUNITY

*Adopted to Winnipeg,
birth mother is from
Tikiraqjuaq or Whale Cove,
Nunavut, birth father originally
from New Brunswick.*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Inuit, English, Norwegian

CURRENT POSITION

Aboriginal Education Consultant and Support Teacher

Nichola Batzel - Tookoome

As an educator,

I enjoy learning about so many Nations across Canada. I enjoy meeting and working with teachers and students and I am glad to be a part of a team that brings forth positive, creative ways of learning for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students. When asked who inspired me to really go after the profession I am now in I would have to say my parents. I was adopted and my parents have always been open and encouraged me to grow and develop my strengths and abilities. Both parents were educators and they inspire me everyday. I have also met my birth parents and I am glad they are strong and I am able to find some answers from knowing them. I grew up away from my people and there were never any resources for my family to utilize. I have always been proud of my background, as my parents taught me to be. Today I work to bring together more resources so that other Urban Inuit find more support and so others have an opportunity to learn about the Inuit. I recognize that the Inuit perspective is not easily accessed as this is not Inuit territory. I hope to find connections and learn about resources that pertain to Inuit peoples so that it is more accessible for people across Canada. I try to connect to both the Inuit and Non-Inuit sides of my life.

There have been many choices I made on my journey. I think that when I made or continue to make choices, I seek guidance from my parents who are my greatest teachers. I thank my parents for their support and guidance. If you enjoy learning and helping young ones along their learning journey, teaching is the career for you. Follow your heart and your dreams. They will not lead you astray.

“*Life is an incredible journey. We are all here to learn. I encourage people to be open to learning experiences that can help you on your journey of life. Learning experiences can take many forms so listen, look, feel and be aware of these experiences as they show up. Some of the greatest lessons can happen in the blink of an eye. Enjoy life and remember why we are here. We all have gifts even if it is hard to find at times. All we have to do is look in and listen to our heart.*”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Post-Bachelorette in Education, Bachelor of Education Degree

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

My role as an educator is to support students, teachers and administrators with the integration of Aboriginal Perspectives. Aboriginal education encompasses the rich traditions and values of the various Aboriginal peoples throughout Canada. It is a great opportunity to apply concepts and issues to help extend our learning. With the extensive and rich history that Aboriginal Peoples have, it is both exciting and enlightening to learn ancient and current teachings and practices.



HOME COMMUNITY
Berens River, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Ojibway

CURRENT POSITION
Special Education Classroom Teacher

Alma Orlene Bernier (Sinclair)

I grew up in a remote

northern community. I was the youngest girl in a family of seven. My mother worked on the reserve and my father was a log cutter/fisherman and was gone seasonally. I lived with my grandmother all my life. She encouraged me to learn and to go to school. After having all her children and working for years my mother decided to go back to school and started from scratch. She became a teacher, taught for fifteen years, and is now retired. I never thought about the hardships that came along with going back to school when it came to my mother, but years later I found myself walking that same path.

“People will benefit from the decisions you make in your life, especially you. A dream is courage with an attitude.”

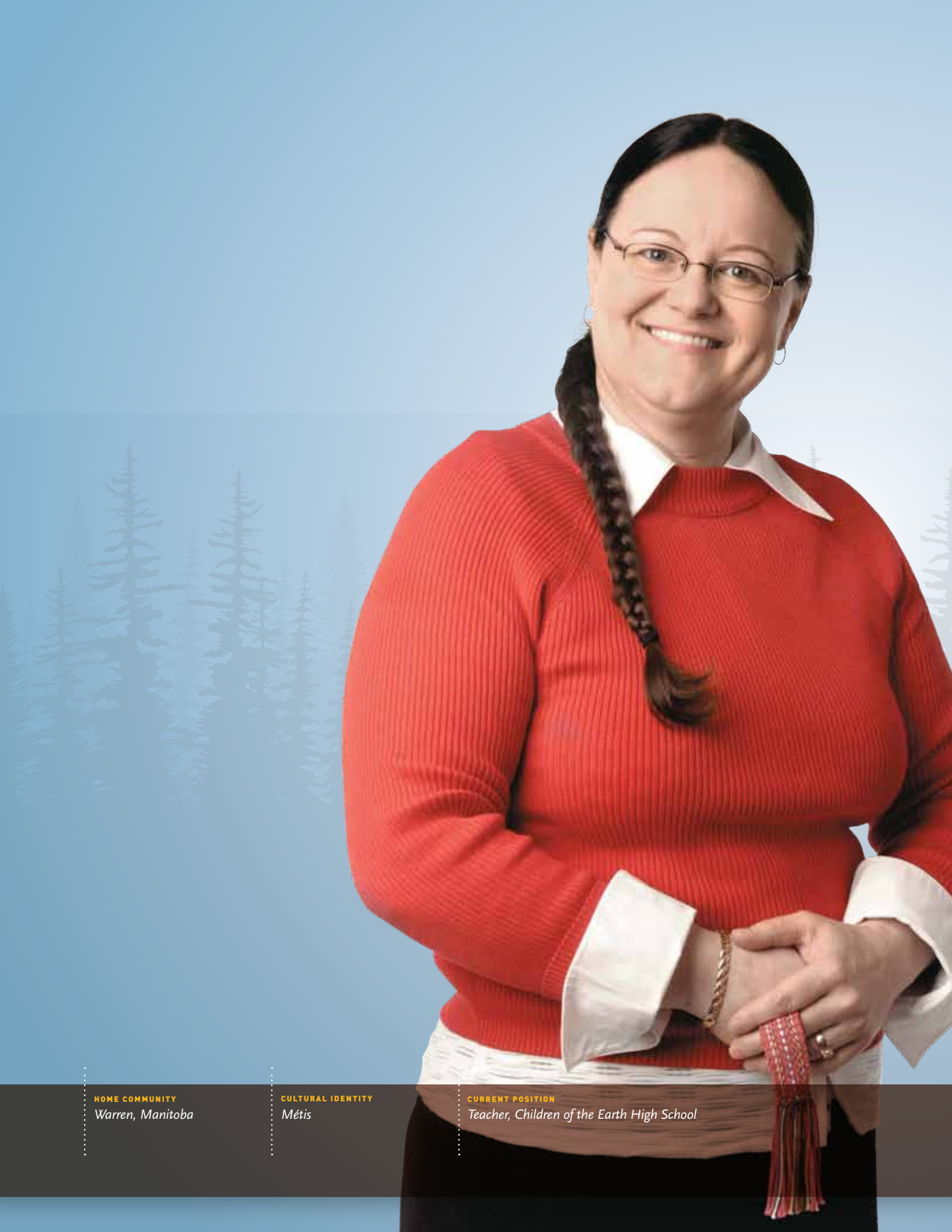
I dropped out of high school in grade 12 and had three children. I was a single parent and had to start working to provide for my children. Years went by and I started to wonder about my future and the future of my children. I found I needed something more. I never knew what I wanted to be when asked by my teachers and friends. I never knew, until I gained employment working in a school as an educational assistant. Times were hard and money was limited, but I enjoyed making a difference in the lives of children. To this day I will never regret any decisions I have made in the course of my life, nor would I change them. Good or bad, every decision I made led to experience and wisdom. Now, I am an educator and enjoy teaching others. I enjoy laughing, playing, sharing, and talking with my students.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

B.Ed, B.A, Health Care Aid,
Educational Assistant Certificate.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Plan and implement specific learning outcomes for each student in the classroom.
Teach, assess, delegate jobs, and do performance evaluations for Educational Assistants.



HOME COMMUNITY
Warren, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Teacher, Children of the Earth High School

Leigh Anne Brown

My story doesn't actually

begin until later in life. Long after most people have completed their education, I decided that going to university would be a very good idea. I was working in a job I didn't really like and living in a city that made me feel isolated and alone. So at the tender age of forty-three I moved back to Manitoba from Toronto and went to school. At first, I felt awkward and uncomfortable and I knew I didn't fit in with my twenty-something classmates. However, eventually I made some friends, and then I made some more friends, and before I knew it, I was having fun and learning and working with people I never would have met if I hadn't gone back to school.

While all of this was really great, the greatest change happened when, in my second year, I took a course called Aboriginal Education. It was this course that really changed my way of thinking and my idea of what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. For me, this course helped me to discover my roots as an Aboriginal person. I grew up knowing that I was Métis but the culture and traditions of that heritage were not a part of my life until I went to university. It was there that I was able to discover this part of myself and connect with my culture and tradition that I found in the broader Aboriginal community. I also began to learn about the social, political, and economic challenges that our people face. More importantly, I began to learn about the important aspects of who Aboriginal people were in Canada. I learned a great deal about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada and about the issues and obstacles that we continue to face. I learned that I can provide guidance to help our youth overcome some of these issues and learned how I too could contribute to our future.



There is no other job in the world that allows a person to touch as many lives as that of a teacher. One good teacher can make a huge difference in the lives of hundreds of children and can help those children along their path to being the leaders of our people tomorrow.



Now, I am working in my dream job – teaching a variety of subjects at a small inner-city high school. I like the diversity of responsibilities available in a small school. I also like the opportunity to connect and develop relationships with the students. In particular, I like working with the grade twelve students to help them graduate and see them off into the next phase of their lives. This is the most fulfilling part of my job. Saying good-bye is difficult, but knowing that I have done my best to give these young people the tools and skills they need to be successful out in the world is more rewarding than anything else I have ever done.

I would certainly encourage young people interested in making a difference to go into education, as this is the best place to make a contribution to the future economic, social, and political direction of Aboriginal people in this country.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts,
Bachelor of Education,
Masters in Education.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I teach grade 12 English Language Arts, World Issues, Program Coordinator for Medical Internship Program -joint education program with Pan Am Clinic. I am the Aboriginal Academic Achievement Coordinator and the English Language Arts Department Head.



HOME COMMUNITY

South Indian Lake, Manitoba/
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Cree

CURRENT POSITION

English Teacher

Angela Louise Veronica Busch

One of the difficulties

I had to overcome to become a teacher was being a single mother while I attended university. My son was and is a blessing to me, but it was hard to be a student and a parent. Even so, I chose to work hard and was able to manage with a great deal of support from my family, friends and the Aboriginal Student Centre at the University of Manitoba. They all made a difference!

I also had inspiration and support in my life. For example, a Métis professor, Dr. Fred Shore, inspired me to want to become a professor or a teacher and as it turned out, I became a teacher. He is an amazing role model and the best teacher I have ever met. I also had to make critical choices to get to where I am today. A critical decision I made was to teach instead of pursue a Master's degree in Native Studies after I completed my Bachelor of Education degree. I am happy I chose to teach because I love working with young Aboriginal people from different communities from all over Manitoba. I find my students very interesting and I enjoy learning from them. They are wonderful!

I realize that my own educational journey required courage in many situations in order to succeed. I have never been afraid to speak my mind, speak out against racism or discrimination, and I always stand up for myself and my people. I think that it is very important for Aboriginal youth to go into teaching and become good teachers. When this happens, we will have an abundance of culturally appropriate role models for our young people to look up to and learn from.

“*South Indian Lake is a small reserve. There are only about 960 people there and I started my education there as a child. It is about 1100 km north of Winnipeg, and is fairly isolated. Yet, people from my community, including myself, have completed their education and have become professionals – SO CAN YOU!*”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts -
Native Studies/Psychology
Bachelor of Education -
History/Native Studies

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Teach English courses, plan, prepare for classes, create new materials, mark, prepare reports and coach basketball.

“
Never give up. We all have a
purpose in life, what is yours?
”



HOME COMMUNITY
Vogar, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Anishinaabe, Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Grade 7-8-9 Teacher

Iris Bernice Chartrand - Mikizii Ikwe

My story begins in a

small Métis community called Vogar, Manitoba. My mother had ten children and I was born the eldest girl. My grandmother was a key figure in my life at an early age. Although she was a widow, she was strong and by choice remained an independent woman. She was the backbone of our family and taught us many things through her actions. My father had to travel to Winnipeg to work and because of that I rarely saw him in my early years; however, I knew he was always there and we could count on him. He would send money to my mom for food, clothing and to buy school supplies. When I was six, my parents decided to move to Winnipeg and that's when my life changed drastically. We were one of the few Aboriginal families that lived in the city. My mother worked to supplement my dad's income and we all had to find ways to meet some of our basic needs and make things work at home. Things felt chaotic at times but we somehow managed to survive these turbulent years. I now realize what our obstacles were as a family, but at the time we found ways to overcome them. I remember a time when we lived in the Point Douglas area, my brother Glen walked a long ways to get to Tec Voc High School every morning because we didn't have bus fare. I now realize how determined he was to get his high school diploma and go on to university. Although we had to deal with poverty, racism and alcoholism, we all kept on going. Being the eldest sister, I felt responsible for my younger siblings. I thank my parents, my grandmother and my older brother Glen for being role models for me. I thank my cousins and siblings because together we all found a way to keep on going.

In my heart I knew I wanted to be an educator too, but life circumstances didn't allow this to happen until later in life. In some cases it was a matter of readiness, but once I made up my mind I realize now that the doors of opportunity kept opening. I went back to university later in life when my children were all old enough to take care of themselves. I worked hard and had to overcome many obstacles but I somehow managed. I can honestly say that racism, poverty and discrimination have been barriers in my life but these are obstacles that can be dealt with in different ways. If we have an important goal to achieve we can get past negative energy that prejudice creates. Our inner sources of energy and our inner strength will always get us

through when we have a goal and good intentions. It is important that we recognize that each of us carries ignorance with us, which is why education is so important. There is always something yet to learn.

Each step of the way, each obstacle I met, I can now say I did it because it was me who ultimately made it to where I am today. In many cases there is someone to thank who was always there to support or guide me. In other cases, I had to stop and reflect on my life and rely on my inner resources to move forward or get through difficult times.

Today I am a middle years teacher at one of the schools I once attended. I enjoy teaching these grade levels because I remember my own life as a young person and recognize through my own experiences that these are some of the toughest years, but also some of the best times of our lives. I feel that my presence alone as an Aboriginal woman in the school makes a difference for some of my Aboriginal students. It helps set them at ease because they are able to see a bit of themselves in me. Simply because I am Aboriginal like them, they find comfort in my presence.

I now realize that it took belief in myself to get to where I am today. I believe that anybody can overcome obstacles and pursue their own dreams. I believe that if our dreams are good and our heart is in the right place we end up where we are supposed to be. Sometimes we need to figure out what our purpose is and sometimes our purpose in life finds us. Whatever the case, a good education is important because it helps us make sense of life.

One of our teachings I've heard is that our youth are our future because they carry our hopes and dreams of a better future. As a grandmother and a teacher, it is my role to nurture the dreams of my students and the young people in my life. I value the energy and vision of the youth because it is the youth who dream big for all of us and I hope to support this growth as a teacher. Although many of our own families and communities still need role models, many of our youth are already leading the way. Some of my own teachers have been young people in my life, including my own family members.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education degree

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Teacher, including mother, wife, sister, aunty, grandmother.

“
Believe in yourself! We all have the capacity to succeed in life provided that we are willing to make the effort. Don't shut doors because you lack the confidence to try something. Surround yourself with people who are positive and supportive. Find a hero in your life, someone who can show you the way. Always be willing to help those following in your footsteps. Offer them the support that helped you... and more.
”



HOME COMMUNITY
The Pas, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Program Coordinator, Aboriginal Education, Red River College

Jeff Chartrand

My education story begins

with my mother who was my inspiration. She had to leave school in grade eight to help her mother at home with her large family. My mother was always at the top of her class, but was never given the opportunities that I had. She always wanted to be a teacher, and encouraged me in that direction. I remember my first week of teaching in Elie, Manitoba. Going out into the parking lot with my carpool group for the drive home, there were my parents waving to me, taking pictures, so proud of their “teacher” son. It was a little embarrassing at the time but I look back with fondness and realize how much that moment meant to them.

It is important to recognize that we all have to make critical decisions in our life and overcome certain obstacles. For me, I remember feeling a little lost at university and I even dropped out in third year because I felt disconnected and unmotivated. My life seemed to fall into place when I met Cheryl, my wife, who is also an educator. In hindsight and compared to obstacles of my current students, I have had very few obstacles to overcome in my life. My parents sacrificed much to send me to St Paul’s High School, one of the top schools in Winnipeg. I owe a lot to my parents and family for their encouragement and unconditional support.

Aboriginal people are facing a special time in Manitoba history. Everywhere you look, you see Aboriginal entrepreneurs and professionals. There is a tremendous need for Aboriginal teachers in our province to encourage our young people to realize that anything is possible through education. If Aboriginal youth could take the wisdom and values of the elders, and raise the bar with education, the next generation is in good hands. We live in a time where anything is possible, as witnessed by the historic presidential election this past November. Our young Aboriginal leaders need to draw on all resources available to them, with pride in their culture, wisdom of the past, education in the present, to create a future that we only dare to dream. One of my own contributions is that I was able to initiate the first Adult Learning Center for the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Today, as an educator, I enjoy meeting and working with the wonderful students in our Aboriginal education programs. Our students come from across the province, each person bringing a unique cultural background and educational goals. I enjoy assisting students who encounter roadblocks during the school year, and I am honored to extend a helping hand no matter what the concern. I have discovered that my role as an educator goes beyond the classroom, and I feel fulfilled when I can help in any small way. I am also blessed to work with such a dedicated staff at Red River.

On a personal note, I am so proud of the four amazing children that my wife and I have brought into this world. Brad, our oldest, has fulfilled the dream of every Canadian boy by playing in the NHL for 5 years with the Los Angeles Kings as well as Team Canada for 2 years. Because of his Cornell Degree in Business Administration, he was recently able to complete his MBA and is currently a marketing director with a Fortune 500 company. Tracey, my oldest daughter, is a new mom, working as a real estate agent in Calgary. Her work ethic is to be commended (takes after my wife). She somehow manages to be one of the top salespersons in her company even with a 10 month old. Renee, my baby girl, has followed in her parents’ footsteps teaching high school mathematics here in Winnipeg. She has such a kind way of dealing with students who need a little extra attention from a thoughtful teacher. And finally, my youngest, Micah, has just started law school in Saskatoon and plans on majoring in Aboriginal law. All of our children, accomplished adults, have a lot to be thankful for and share a common thread beyond their family; they were all given the opportunity to obtain a solid education and made the most of it. The next generation in my family is in good hands.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts,
Teaching Certificate

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Educator in the public school system for 29 years. Program director for “Second Start”—an alternative education program in St. James Assiniboia. Aboriginal Centre Teacher five-years.



“ I encourage First Nation youth to pursue a career in education and to learn your history. We can re-teach the truth of our First Nation history. Learn your language. Remember who you are and where you come from. Never stop learning. Don't fear the future. To fight fear is to build courage. Wisdom comes from experience. Ask questions and seek resources to help you find confidence. Seek the wisdom of our Elders. Our own families have Elders who you can go to. Don't be afraid to ask for guidance. Never let anything or anyone tell you that you can't do it, when you know that you can. Ask for the Creator's protection. One very important thing that I can leave you with is the teaching that “The closest thing to the Creator is the children.” We need you to become teachers of tomorrow and teach the young people a good way to live. You, too, can leave your impressions and hopes for the future in their hearts. Miigwech, All My Relations ”

HOME COMMUNITY
Sandy Bay First Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Anishinaabe,
Salteaux First Nation

CURRENT POSITION
Classroom Instructor in Youth T.E.R.F. (Transition, Education and Resources for Females) Program at New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults and Families in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Myrna Emma Chartrand

I enjoy my role

as an educator because I am able to develop and integrate First Nation perspectives in the curriculum, which includes the Medicine Wheel teachings, Seven Teachings and New Moon Teachings. As an educator, I am constantly learning alongside my students and with the people I work with daily. I believe in what I do and am humbled from what the participants teach me. I also enjoy the healing aspects of the program.

I have had to overcome obstacles to get where I am today. For example, although I have been a single parent, these three beautiful children (Kyle, Monique and Jennifer) give me the incentive to work hard and persevere. I wanted them to see a strong and independent mother who believes education is the key to success. Poverty was also another obstacle that I had to overcome. I struggled daily to make ends meet, to put food on the table, and to provide clothes for my children. However, these were obstacles that also inspired me to want to give my children a better life.

I realized it was ultimately up to me to change my situation. I decided to return back to school to complete my Mature Student Diploma and later went on to university to complete two degrees, one in the Arts and the other in Education. Alcohol, abuse, and a suicide in the family gave me other reasons to change my life because I wanted to break the cycle of abuse. These are all reasons why I wanted to become a First Nations teacher. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of our young people by encouraging them to do their best and to show them that, as a teacher, I would genuinely care and be interested in their lives. I would listen to what they had to say. So my journey to becoming a teacher began on the Red Road. My First Nation culture helped me heal, learn, and gain awareness that has inspired and motivated me to want to change my whole way of life.

My mother was the first of three people who inspired me to complete school. She always demonstrated strength and resilience over the years. Secondly, my father showed me the value of hard work and persistence. He worked so hard his whole life and continued to sing and have hope right to the end. He always

told me that I am a good mother and daughter. My seventh grade science teacher, Miss Kline, I recognize as the third inspiration in my life. She always took the time to guide me and offered encouragement when I wanted to give up going to school. I have loved science ever since.

I realize that I had to make some choices in my pursuit of higher education. I had to sacrifice quality time with my children and there were times that I wanted to quit. I had to overcome self-doubt, but always looked to my children to keep me going. I was also fortunate to be part of a large family. We would always try to have large family gatherings that would bring all of us together. My Granny and Grandpa from Sandy Bay are still here with us and they are the biggest reason why we find the time for the whole family to meet. They taught us to be proud of ourselves and to work hard for what we wanted. Showing love was not just saying it, we showed it through actions. I also had to make a decision to put my social life on hold and concentrate on my future goals. Some friends drifted away, but the ones that I hold dear were the ones that I would call whenever I got discouraged. They helped me stay focused and lent a friendly ear or shoulder to cry on when I needed it. You know who you are.

I believe it is important for our First Nation youth to receive a higher education because they are our future leaders. They will be the ones that will take care of our future and lead the next generation. It is important to remember that our ancestors prayed for us and negotiated treaties to ensure that we were given the right to an education so that one day we would have a better life. It is their prayers that have brought me to the place where I am today. I can relate to our youth because I come from the same place they do and that is why it is important to give back what I have been blessed with - an education.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education, U of W Education Centre

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching, guiding youth through First Nation practices and traditions including smudging ceremonies, sharing circles, medicine picking and facilitating and teaching students the Kapaapako Miikiwap (The Butterfly Lodge Teachings). I also teach Math, English, Computer, and Family Studies. I help students to learn empathy through the Roots of Empathy Program. My most important role is teaching in the TERF program where I offer females who have been exploited a chance to learn about their culture which gives them a strong foundation to gain basic social and academic skills.

Since my involvement

with my Aboriginal community began, both in education and our community at large, I feel that I have been able to find a sense of place and purpose for myself. When I was first exposed to our Anishinaabe teachings there was lots of stuff I didn't understand, but I listened well and it kept me wondering. These experiences were coloring my world as they filled in some important pieces about my life as an Anishishinaabe Ikwe. I am thankful that we were able to connect with traditional people through the schools I attended because each experience I encountered encouraged me to seek out our traditional people further. It also helped me appreciate what I had learned from my own grandparents and family members. Although we did not articulate it, our families have hung onto many of our traditional practices and this was only brought to light for me when I had a context to understand this. It is the traditional teachings and experiences that have helped me make sense of who we are as a people.

My exposure to Anishinaabe teachings in school began in junior high and opened me up to a world that was hidden in plain sight. Our stories created space and gave meaning to my life. The Seven Fires Prophecy was one such story that I now realize was more than story. What I heard was an account of our history as Anishinaabe people and an invitation to be a part of its unfolding story. This particular story created space for me, the listener, to participate and it directed me towards Pimatisiwin: a beautiful path in life that was left behind and maintained by our Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The story speaks of the different eras our people went through and ends with a focus on the present time. It was our elders and traditional spokespeople who said our people would wake up and pick up what was left behind for us to make our nations strong again. It has been an exciting journey to see this story come to life over the past twenty years. It was wonderful to find a sense of purpose in stories that made space for my presence and that afforded me new and meaningful life opportunities. It instilled a sense of responsibility that directed my life-actions. These stories gave me something to believe in and I was drawn to its endless possibilities.



HOME COMMUNITY

Pine Creek First Nation,
Vogar Manitoba,
Winnipeg Inner-city

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Anishinaabe, Métis

CURRENT POSITION

Aboriginal Education Consultant, The Winnipeg School Division

Rebecca Chartrand - Wapunoong Ikwe

Through my schools' sports experiences I always felt like we were the underdogs in our visits to other schools. For some reason we knew that people would expect bad behavior from us. Heck, I think we even expected it ourselves! It's unfortunate that as Aboriginal students we had come to see ourselves in this way. Luckily, the stories that I heard counteracted what I was learning through my life experiences as a young person growing up in the North End of Winnipeg. It allowed me to see and expect something different in who we were and more importantly it inspired me to root for the underdogs

When I became a teacher I wanted all my students to make sense of their own worlds and to find meaning and purpose in their life. Although I could not know all of their histories, as a teacher I hoped that I could help them find their way. I think that is what teaching is all about. I have lived a richer life because of my educational experiences and community involvement. I have such great respect for teachers who have come in many forms, my grandparents, my mom and dad, my siblings, my daughter, my friends including the many other Aboriginal educators I have come to know over the years. Each one has worked hard to get where they are and I have always been in awe of their strength. It is because of our collective and growing presence that I found my own strength and abilities.

I remember attending a sweat lodge ceremony conducted by Dan Thomas and Garry Robson once. One comment stuck with me from that experience; the idea that we must not always focus on the negative in the telling of our stories because that is what we bring into our life if we constantly give attention to it. We have to remember to balance our life out by focusing on and working towards the positive. I think I carried that with me for a long time, because for many years I have been so motivated in my desire to support our growing initiatives that give rise to our voice and presence. This is how I thought we could bring back the positive to our collective.

It is important to have a dream and to envision the world you hope to live in. That is the world you will create because we are the engineers of our own lives.

Overall, I am so grateful for the opportunities that have been afforded to me as a student who was exposed to Aboriginal teachers and meaningful educational experiences. Although I didn't appreciate it then, I am thankful that my parents made me stay in school. As an Aboriginal educator, I have wanted to provide my students with the same type of meaningful experiences I had as a student. It is interesting to think that residential schools were the places that cut us off from our own identity, yet for me it was in school where I was first given the opportunity to make some important discoveries. Schools can be places that bring a sense of purpose, belonging and identity back to our people but we must be conscious and consistent in our efforts to do so. We do need more Aboriginal youth to pursue education as a career and fill the role of a teacher, a consultant, a principal, a professor or the many other jobs that are available to those with a teaching degree.

I am glad that through my education I have been fortunate to participate in many meaningful life experiences. I have also been able to initiate some of my own. One of the things I am most proud of is that I helped to establish the Aboriginal Circle of Educators, Aboriginal Education Awards Banquet. Although I recognize myself as a founder, this event was made possible by many Aboriginal educators coming together and putting some of their effort and time into making this idea a reality. There is lots of room for new initiatives and we need you to participate and contribute to making your ideas a reality. So why wouldn't you want to become an educator? There is a whole community of people waiting for your great ideas and contributions.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education,
Masters in Education
(pending)

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Support and promote the natural inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in education.



HOME COMMUNITY

*Sagkeeng First Nation,
Manitoba*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

*Anishnabe Nation,
Eagle Clan*

CURRENT POSITION

Educator of traditional Anishinaabe knowledge and way of life

David Courchene Jr.

Neeghani Aki Innini – Leading Earth Man

I enjoy my work

as a speaker of the traditional teachings that have been handed on to me by our elders and knowledge keepers. It is the elders who have inspired me to really assume this teaching role that I am in today. It allows me the freedom to express the teachings and has directed my actions in life. For example, it became my responsibility to build the Turtle Lodge in Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba. The main facility of the Turtle Lodge was built by volunteers as a labor of love and completed in 2003. Today it is a place where we can experience our ceremonies, hear our teachings and continue to learn from the sacred laws of our people, such as the Seven Sacred Laws. It's important to note that I had to make some critical decisions to get to where I am today. I chose to leave the system in order to return to the land that would allow me to learn from the sacred sites. It is these first hand experiences, and my interaction and commitment to being on the land that has allowed me to learn the teachings which has allowed me to activate our sacred sites and my own spirit. This has come from trusting in my own spirit and through embracing an Indigenous way of life.

I have had obstacles or challenges to overcome in order to sustain my course of action. As a teacher of traditional knowledge I recognize that there are so many stereotypes and misconceptions about who we are as a people. The challenge is to inspire people to be open to a way of life that everyone can benefit from and to help people see the reality of spirit. I overcome these obstacles through perseverance and through the continued encouragement and mentorship from the Elders.

I believe it is important for our youth to pursue education as a career. Our youth should get as much education as possible that could lend to our survival as a people. It's important to note that an academic education is an intellectual one. This type of education is important but we must also remember that we can also learn in other ways that nurture other parts of our being. We need to learn about the spirit and about what

“The Elders have confirmed in the gatherings and in the ceremonies that we have arrived at a time where, “A New Life is Arriving”. We are told by the Elders that it would be the Indigenous people who would lay the foundation for a new life. So I would encourage everyone, not just indigenous people, to learn about the Seven Sacred Laws. There are important teachings that can be the foundation for our individual lives, for family and community life.

Spirit is what gives us vision. Spirit is what holds the Truth. We are born from Spirit. It is the essence of Love. The Elders are there to offer direction and support for anyone who is serious about understanding the truth of life and the sacred relationship we have with the Earth.

is around us. For example, there is much learning that comes from the land and we must remember that the earth is what truly sustains us. It is important to know about our place in all of creation because it is this learning that will truly sustain all life. We can also learn from your Elders, from participating in ceremonies.

I recognize the significance of my own educational journey and hope it inspires youth to find their place in life. The knowledge of the Elders is part of our ancient ways that has survived the generations. Through these teachings we come to learn that each of us must take responsibility for our individual lives and at the same time we must recognize our own unique gifts that will help all of us to survive. This is a responsible way to live that requires discipline.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Grade 12; Former Director of Education, Sagkeeng Education Authority; Left the system to pursue an education with the Elders

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Speaker, I speak on behalf of the Seven Sacred Laws that form the foundation of our Indigenous way of life. I am also a teacher.



HOME COMMUNITY
Winnipeg

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Iroquois and Canadian

CURRENT POSITION
Researcher - Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre

Frank Deer

Living on the Kahnawake

First Nation of Southern Quebec, I was raised by a family that worked hard and provided for each other. Although neither of my parents had acquired a high school education, they both encouraged me to pursue higher education. As I reflect on my early school experiences, I had few role models who embodied the virtues that would nurture in me a desire to pursue higher education. Unfortunately, this initially led to a high school experience that was not very enriching. I was not interested in school and my mind was frequently on other things.

Like many young people, there was a time when I did not appreciate high school. As a result, my academic performance was not impressive. Fortunately, I found a positive outlet through playing sports and this helped me focus on my studies. It also provided me with valuable role models who inspired me to pursue higher education – as they led through example.

Later, as an aging athlete in university I realized I had to make some decisions about my future career. After a short time as a teacher-in-training, I concluded that working in education could lead to a rewarding career. For one thing, it would allow me to continue coaching and mentoring young athletes. So I made the decision to become a teacher. It has led to other opportunities and has allowed me to contribute to the betterment of my community.

My first teaching experience took place in South Indian Lake, a small Aboriginal community in northern Manitoba. It has always been one of my favorite teaching experiences for a number of reasons. For one, I really enjoyed the natural beauty of the region and the eagerness of my students to learn. This provided me with a positive work experience that I will remember forever. It also inspired me to pursue an academic career in educational leadership. I later enrolled in the Master's program in educational administration at the University of Manitoba and served as a substitute teacher before moving to Saskatoon to complete a doctoral degree in Educational Administration.

In the last few years, I have had the opportunity to teach at both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Manitoba. Currently, I am a Research and Development Specialist with the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. My current position is very rewarding because it allows me to address the unique issues associated with First Nations education. Although my career is still evolving, I realize that I was able to get where I am today because I chose to continue pursuing higher education. I realize that education has allowed me to create a solid foundation on which I have been able to build a successful professional career.

“*Education is a journey that may involve struggle. Don't fear this journey, even if it takes you away from home. The journey of acquiring education can be regarded as a microcosm of life: one that is long-term and that may involve many challenges. It is important to remember that we must often make sacrifices in order to realize our goals.*”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education - University of Manitoba
Masters in Education - University of Manitoba
PhD - University of Saskatchewan

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Curriculum developer, researcher and scholarly writer.



HOME COMMUNITY

*Wabowden - Member
of Nischawaysihk Cree Nation*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

*Cree (with Oji-Cree/
German/Scottish ancestry)*

CURRENT POSITION

Teaching Faculty, University of Manitoba

Laara Fitznor

I enjoy the autonomy

I am given to advance Aboriginal perspectives in education from our community to the world at large. I realize that I have worked hard to overcome many obstacles, such as racism (including cultural racism) and sexism, in my efforts to promote Aboriginal perspectives. I faced these challenges by educating myself, which helped me persevere in the face of opposition and oppression. My education has been grounded in Aboriginal philosophy, which has also helped me continue this thread of promoting Aboriginal perspectives throughout my career.

I believe I was inspired to pursue the profession of education when I met with professors who seemed to care about us as Aboriginal people. They helped me see that we had something to contribute to Canadian society and that we could do this without giving up who we are as Indigenous peoples. With an educational background I was able to ensure that our voices were heard. I also had to make some critical decisions in my life to get where I am today. I had to study hard, study smart, stay focused and pray or meditate at times. This always got me through rough times.

I believe it is important for our youth to pursue education as a career because education will help us maintain and advance Aboriginal peoples' way of thinking and being. We must educate ourselves and others about who we are as Aboriginal people locally, nationally and internationally. It is also important for our young people to stay clear of unhealthy lifestyles related to drugs, alcohol, and smoking, and to remember that we come from a people worth fighting for.

“*Persevere and have pride in your heritage.*”

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Doctor of Education

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES
Teaching, community service and research.



HOME COMMUNITY

Born and raised in Thorold, Ontario. My family's community is Baker Lake, NU

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Inuit

CURRENT POSITION

Dean, The School of Indigenous Education, Red River College

Marti Ford

I think my profession found me.

When I first decided to go back to school, I was living in Churchill, Manitoba. I was a single mother and knew I needed an education to support my daughter. I started with upgrading to ensure I had the skills to succeed. After graduating from university I took a job in Thompson working with adults. As I was recently in the same situation as many of my students and could relate to how they were feeling about going back to school, everything seemed to click. I loved my job and, over the years, as my position has changed, my respect for my students has grown. I think education is a very noble career. There is no other way to have more impact on a person's life than to provide them with knowledge that they can use to create success, confidence and security for themselves and their families.

I think the most important message I could pass on is that education really does change lives. An educator affects the lives of their students, their own families, the students' families and their community. Teachers affect people's lives every day. Who doesn't remember a favourite teacher?

The favourite part of my job is travelling to the various communities to meet the people I work with. I also love hearing the stories of students and seeing people succeed toward their dreams. I realize I have a great job because I get to work with adults and see people's lives change within a very short period of time and I enjoy that. The biggest obstacle within my job is dealing with students who don't see their potential. I overcome this obstacle by having a support team in place which includes Elders and counselors to help students see their potential and stay in school.

The most difficult career choice I made was to leave teaching to go into administration. For me it was difficult because I always loved working with students, but I felt that in administration I could have more impact at the post-secondary level.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts
Bachelor of Education
Post Bachelorette Certification
Masters in Education

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

As Dean of the School of Indigenous Education, I am responsible for working with a team of Educators to support and educate Aboriginal students by working with the students, their families and their communities. We work with Red River College staff to educate them about Aboriginal people. We are a liaison between the college and the community to provide advice and support in helping students succeed. I am also responsible for working with my team to set the goals and vision of the division and to ensure that these goals are being met.



Boozhou, Tansji,

Hello, My name is Lance Guilbault. Awinigaabo ndizhnikaaaz (“The Fog or Mist That Stands Alone/The Standing Fog”) is my spirit name. Ginew ndotem (“Golden Eagle”) is my Clan. I was raised in a traditional environment where I was able to participate in ceremonies. With my family I was able to travel great lengths for ceremonies to places in Manitoba and others like Usk, Idaho, and Peever, South Dakota, or southern British Columbia. I am thankful that I was able to embrace our sacred ways because my parents made a point of taking me to these sacred spaces like the Sundance, sweat lodge, powwows and other ceremonies. I am fortunate that my mother and father have also played important roles in many of these gathering places. I have seen them dance, sing, fast, be shkabes: helpers and workers, leaders and advisors. I realize that today many of my family members have chosen to be social workers and teachers. I too have made this choice for myself because I have had many good teachers in my life. For example, my grandparents are residential school survivors and have been by far my wisest teachers. It is perhaps because of them that my entire family has embraced the traditional life of the Anishinabe and Cree people. I am thankful that I have been taught to embrace life as a gift and celebrate knowledge as power.

HOME COMMUNITY

*Born and raised in Winnipeg.
My mother, is from Koostatak:
Fisher River Cree Nation.
My father is from Roseau River
Anishinabe First Nation*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

*Cree and Anishinabe
ancestry*

CURRENT POSITION

Educational Assistant, R.B. Russell Vocational High School

Lance Guilbault - Awinigaabo ndizhnikaaaz

I recently married and together with my wife I journey towards a beautiful future by following our sacred teachings and laws. This is what we believe will help our children grow into successful young men. We also teach them about our history as First Nations people in Canada to ensure that they are not taught misconceptions about Aboriginal people. I believe there is still much to be told in our schools about the true history of Canada. We recognize that there is still much discrimination, ignorance and manipulation within our institutions, but we recognize we are all still learning and that things are getting better. We can use our sacred ways to heal as a people.

Together, my wife and I share these teachings with vast amounts of students and educators. She has worked in the Seven Oaks School Division for seven years and I have worked in the Winnipeg School Division for nine years. It is within these institutions that we have shared, taught, and learned together with our students, our colleagues and our school communities. We have both completed three years of CATEP, the Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, while juggling full-time work and a family. I appreciate that this program has enabled Aboriginal employees in both of our school divisions to attend university while we continue to work in the school system. Our learning and experiences have allowed us to learn about some of the most beautiful and articulate Aboriginal writers and artists in Canada. We have learned about historical stories and about some of our most prolific leaders and heroes. This has helped us learn about such things as our rights and the treaties. It has been both an emotional and empowering journey. I realize that education has enabled our people to overcome the residential school era, the "60's Scoop", and address legislative genocide. We truly believe education can help make Canada a beautiful place to live for everyone!

I realize that as a role model I too can make mistakes, but I learn from my mistakes. I am a teacher that doesn't have all the answers, and I'm not afraid to learn from others. I am a warrior with a warrior's soul, but I've never had to use my fists for the most significant battles in my life. I realize that I can

fight with words as my actions. I believe this is how I can make a difference for my people, my community, and my Canada. I also realize that the greatest battle I have ever fought is with myself. I strive to be the best man that I can be. It is through being a great husband, a great father, a great teacher and a great role model that I am able to live a good quality of life because these are the things that define me as a warrior. Overall, I believe a good education is my armor.

I practice honouring my spirit name and who I am by honouring the voices of our Elders. I practice living a good life by following the many beautiful teachings in our culture such as the seven sacred teachings, the circle teachings, or the lodge teachings. I try to find ways to integrate these teachings into our classrooms and our homes. I try to see that these teachings can benefit all people in Canada because they are universal.

My priority is to provide a more involved school community that will benefit all of our students. I want our students to respect themselves and others, and to be respected. I want our students to belong and encourage others to belong. I want our students to be responsible for themselves and for others around them, whether they are in their class or at home. This is how I encourage young men and women to be successful.

My family is the basis for my success. The teachings I carry, I carry with pride, with love, and with truth to myself, my Elders, and those around me. It has been a natural aspect, inherent in my being, to coach, to teach, and to pay respect to those teachers who shared wondrous amounts of knowledge, wisdom and strategies which have helped me become successful. Today I see myself as a worker, a shkabe, and I intend to do the best job I can with the resources that surround me.

Meegwetch, Ekosani and Thank You.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Grade 12, Currently in CATEP-
Community-based Aboriginal
Teacher Education Program-
fourth year

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I work collectively with our families, parents, students, staff and various community organizations in Winnipeg's inner city.



HOME COMMUNITY
Creek County, Oklahoma

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Cherokee and Choctaw

CURRENT POSITION
*President and Vice-Chancellor of the
University College of the North*

Denise K. Henning, Ph.D.

I believe that education

is the solution to a better life. It has led to a stronger sense of stability and created more security in my life. It has also allowed me to meet my needs in life and has also provided opportunities for me to make a difference in other people's lives. It is important to know that there are many opportunities for you in life but you are responsible for recognizing them and then making an extra effort to get them. The Creator always provides if you are centered and on the red road.

There were obstacles I had to overcome in order to get where I am today. For example, I lived in poverty, I was a single parent, I had no funding for education, and I was also not prepared at first for this educational journey. I overcame these things through support from different people I met throughout my life. There were people at every turn who assisted me directly or who could help me find a solution. As long as I was willing to ask for help there was always someone there. My family's love and support was also important. Even though they did not always understand what I was experiencing, they were there. As a student, I set goals and focused on those goals one semester at a time.

“*Know that our ancestors died for you to be here. It is up to you to change your world but remember that you are walking on their bones. Walk lightly and respectfully. Know who you are!*”

I am thankful for the people who inspired me to go after the profession I am in today, including Dr. Dale Stover at the University of Nebraska, Dr. Del Weber and Wilma Mankiller. Encouragement and inspiration are always important motivators to achieving your goals. At the same time, when things were tough all I had to do was look in the faces of my children and know that their lives were worth every sacrifice that needed to be made. I felt that I could do anything as long as I took it one step at a time. Within my current position today, I enjoy meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners and helping them achieve their educational dreams and goals.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Science in Urban Studies/Public Administration.
Master of Science in Public Administration
Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration with
emphasis on Educational Anthropology

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

As the Chief Executive Officer, I am responsible for meeting the mission, vision, and mandate for University College of the North.



HOME COMMUNITY

*Vogar, Manitoba and
band member of Ebb
and Flow First Nation*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

First Nation/Métis

CURRENT POSITION

Teacher, Maples Collegiate

Wade Houle

I had to overcome

certain obstacles in order to achieve my goals in life. I moved away from home at a young age. I also changed high schools. I had tremendous support from my parents and with the billet family I stayed with when I moved to the city. With support and patience, I slowly overcame being homesick and learned how to be independent. At the age of 20, I decided to go to university. I was out of school for two complete years and was scared to enter the academic world of higher learning. Unprepared, I realized quickly that there was plenty of hard work ahead of me.

My parents never pressured me at any time of my life to pursue a certain career. However, they did stress that I was going to university, whether it be right out of high school or years after. My mother was a teacher and I spent a lot of time in and around a classroom. She had the patience and demeanor of a teacher. My father and grandfather have tremendous work ethic, and I would like to think that I have combined these characteristics.

There is extreme under-representation of Aboriginal people in all professional careers. With our booming population rates in our province there is a greater need for more Aboriginal people to lead and teach about our own perspectives. I had the opportunity to pursue an education and this has helped me to be successful. I realize that it has also placed me in a role of leadership. I appreciate this role and take it seriously as I feel the need to be responsible. I enjoy being a teacher because it is exciting, challenging, and changing every day. The environment I work in is welcoming and supportive, which is another reason I enjoy coming to work.

“Provide an opportunity for a child to succeed, and that child will.”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts,
Bachelor of Education

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I teach Native Awareness, Social Studies and English.
I also coach high school hockey and baseball programs.



HOME COMMUNITY

St. Boniface, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Métis

CURRENT POSITION

Teacher

Michel Hupé

As a teacher,

I enjoy guiding students as they grow and develop through school experiences. I enjoy watching students' independence and self confidence evolve as they become more responsible for their own success.

The obstacles I faced as a student helped me realize how determined I was to succeed. No doubt they presented unpleasant situations but I used them as motivation. When I would hear discouraging comments like "you can't do that" I would tell myself, "Try and stop me!" When I decided to become an educator the only people who truly believed I would succeed were my parents. I can remember them reflecting on my school experiences as youth and scratching their heads about what I had decided. I explained to my parents that I wanted to help kids who struggle in school and they threw their support behind me 100%. Today I am preparing to enter the counseling field. I was encouraged and inspired to pursue my post-baccalaureate by Byron Jones, former administrator at Munroe Jr. High. I saw that he was driven to help kids succeed. Studying with Dr. Glenn McCabe, counseling professor at the University of Manitoba, has also inspired me to put my post-baccalaureate studies to use. I now hope to assist Aboriginal youth through counseling and lending support where I can.

Surround yourself with positive people, be a positive source to those who choose to be around you.

Learn all that you can. The more you learn the more you will believe in yourself. The self confidence that comes from learning can be the driving force to succeed.

Once you believe in yourself there is no stopping you.

I chose to further my education after a few years of classroom teaching. I felt drawn to help those students who struggled for whatever reason and decided I would develop the ability to help students experience success despite their struggles. I believe it is important to share what we know so we can continue to learn. Education as a career provides the opportunity to share with our children what we know and what we believe will help them. My own educational journey has taught me that there is potential in everyone to succeed.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

*Bachelor of Education,
Post-Baccalaureate*

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Support and encourage students as they discover themselves and their potential.



HOME COMMUNITY
Fisher River

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Swampy Cree

CURRENT POSITION
Associate Professor Emerita
University of British Columbia (Retired)

Verna Kirkness

It was always my dream

to become a teacher. That dream and taking advantage of opportunities led me to a career in education. On my journey, I was encouraged and assisted by many people. My grandfather, Jim Kirkness, was one whose own journey instilled in me that I could be whatever I wanted to be if I worked hard and had a passion for whatever I set out to do. Other members in Fisher River showed an interest as did my teachers in my elementary school days. In hindsight, I enjoyed the opportunity to open doors for Aboriginal students not only in education but in all disciplines and all levels of education. It is never easy to create new opportunities and change the status quo. I surrounded myself with like-minded people and appealed to the senior administrators who responded to my requests for change that was necessary if we were to effectively serve Aboriginal students and their communities

One of the critical decisions was to accept promotion and move on from teaching to other fields of education. I was happy to reach my goal of becoming a teacher. When the opportunity arose for me to become a principal, I had to be coaxed and prodded to accept this greater responsibility. I'm glad I did, as it led to more ways of contributing that allowed me to promote Aboriginal education. Teaching is both challenging and rewarding. It is setting the foundation for each child in your class to realize his/her dream. You instill confidence in the children by helping them to understand who they are and their potential to succeed. Probably, the most challenging is the kindergarten and primary years. We need more males to consider teaching as a career. They are particularly needed in the junior high school years and are worth a million in the early years as they present a father figure especially to those who are children of single mothers. Follow the philosophy as set out in the 1972 policy of Indian Control of Indian Education which states: "We believe in education as a means of enabling us to participate fully in or own social, economic, political, and educational advancement".

“The answers are within us.”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Professional First Class Teacher's Certificate, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed., 4 honorary doctorates. (C.M., O.M., M.Ed., LL.D.), Associate Professor Emeritus - UBC

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

During my career, I held positions as: elementary school teacher, principal, guidance counselor, schools supervisor, curriculum consultant, education director- Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, National Indian Brotherhood, freelance consultant, directorships and associate professor in education (UBC). Since retirement, I worked extensively on preserving and maintaining our Aboriginal languages in Canada, led the University College of the North community consultations and initiated a Ph.D. program for Aboriginal Scholars at the U of M.



HOME COMMUNITY
Winnipeg, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Cree - Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Teacher - St. John's High School

Dale Klassen

It thrills me to see

students be successful. It is a rewarding experience to be a teacher and this is what attracted me to education. As a teacher at St. John's High School I believe I am fortunate to hold the responsibility of overseeing our Aboriginal Academic Achievement and Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents programs. It provides me with an excellent opportunity to develop and enhance our Aboriginal programming within our school and community. I have occasionally been asked if I have ever had any serious difficulties or obstacles to overcome in order to get to where I am today. There have not been that many. The most difficult time in my life was losing both my parents and a younger brother at an early age. It was not an easy time, but the encouragement and support of others helped me stay on a good path. It would have been easy to become angry or wallow in self pity, but the support I received helped make sure that didn't happen. I'm grateful for this support and remain mindful that many students are going through difficult situations of their own. One can never underestimate the effect that caring and encouragement can have on others.

Making good choices also helped to overcome obstacles and allowed me to get to where I am today. One critical choice was the decision to learn about my Aboriginal heritage, to trust in Creator, and to follow my dreams. This ultimately led to making a career change later in life. I began a career in Aboriginal education. I have learned from the Elders that education is our new buffalo. Not long ago, the buffalo supplied everything that we needed to survive in our past, and today, education will help us flourish as a people once again.

First, I want to point out that change is possible! The best example I have is my mom, who was Cree. She had a very difficult life. Her mom died when she was six years old and her dad served in World War II. These experiences led to a difficult home life for her. As a result of troubles in the home she spent her childhood in an abusive foster home. In spite of these life difficulties she became a teacher. Together, both my parents taught in a number of First Nation communities in western and northern Manitoba. I realize that although what happened to her never left her, she was able to break a cycle and kept her children from experiencing what she went through. To me this proves that change is possible. Unfortunately, she died of cancer when she was only 40 years old, but she has remained my hero. Second, although this is becoming somewhat of a cliché, it is never too late to make a change and pursue your dreams. I am certainly thankful that I did.

Education provides the opportunity to choose your career, attain your dreams, gain economic independence, and ultimately break the cycle of poverty and dependency. More importantly, education can be used to make a positive difference in the communities and lives of all Aboriginal peoples. We have to remember that in the old days we did not focus on the individual. Rather, it was always about the good of everyone in the community. This is what kept our Nations strong and healthy.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Master of Science in Agriculture (Nutritional Biochemistry) Ph.D. (candidate) Molecular Biology (Cancer Research), Bachelor of Education. I continue to learn about my Aboriginal culture and heritage from Aboriginal Elders, personal study, and through participation in ceremony.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Teach Grade 7 Math, Science, and Native Studies, Team Leader, Aboriginal Academic Achievement Representative, Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents Representative, Member of Advisory Committee for United Against Racism at Ka Ni Kani Kanichihk, Member of Aboriginal Circle of Educators. I enjoy teaching young children and have a strong desire to work with Aboriginal students and promote Aboriginal education.



HOME COMMUNITY
Fisher River Cree Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Cree/Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Curriculum Writer

Myra Laramée

As an educator

in the academic world, I enjoy being able to tell the authentic story about First Nations and Métis people. I currently work with a team of First Nation people and we collaborate with other First Nations people to create programs and models in education. For example, I sit on a working group which is working through a process to create an Indigenous Post Secondary Institute. I enjoy writing courses which explore the ingenuity of the First Peoples of this land, which provide opportunities for all people to learn about our history, culture and perspectives. Telling the stories of our people is most rewarding. Working with adults is another part of my work. I conduct workshops, teach courses and facilitate professional development for educators. This work with adults includes working with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

As an educator of traditional knowledge, I am a Bundle Carrier and a Knowledge Keeper. I have a responsibility to ensure that the traditional teachers who imparted their knowledge to me didn't do that for nothing. This means that in any work that I do with people it must be about the integrity of the knowledge of our people. This is probably the most rewarding work that I do.

The greatest obstacle I face in my work is dealing with the void; the lack of knowledge people have about First Nations and Métis people. Another obstacle is the racism that still exists in systems that I encounter in my journey. The "Ivory Towers" of mainstream post-secondary institutions is where I focus my attention. It is here where I choose to work with allies in a place of learning and collaboration.

When asked what or who inspires me to do this work I think about a few things. I think about my dreams and guiding spirits. They have been a source of inspiration and have helped guide my writing about our people and our ways. I was told through my dreams that I had to help our people through writing about what I have learned from the Elders. I took this seriously and counseled with the old women in my life and they encouraged me to write what the ancestors want me to write. I also think about my parents because they have been most inspirational to my work as an educator. I also realize that the greatest teachers I have had and the most profound inspiration have come from the children and youth who have been in my learning care for thirty-one years.

Every person has something to teach and learn. Be the best you can be and let the teacher in you shine while remembering the learning is a lifelong journey. Whatever you do in life, let it be something that will make your ancestors smile and will create a safer place for the next seven generations to come.

I had to make some critical decisions in my life to get to where I am today. For one, I chose life instead of the other road that leads nowhere. This road I chose helped me heal and take control of my addictions and abuse patterns. This choice helped me find my old people. It is important for youth to be aware of their options out there. We need more youth to pursue education as a career because we need our own people to continue to tell our own story.

The belief that people had in me was a powerful force in my life. I challenge the adult world to have this same type of belief for the youth that are in their lives. The hardest and greatest belief to secure and maintain in life is the belief you have in yourself. It is important that we all believe in ourselves because I realize that if I believe in me then I can believe in others.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education, Masters in Education, Ph.D. Candidate

ROLE/RESPONSIBILITIES

I am a Bundle Carrier and Knowledge Keeper, curriculum writer, instructor and teacher of educators



HOME COMMUNITY
Big Boy, Alberta

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Cree/Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Professor of Native Studies, University of Manitoba

Emma LaRocque

I was born in a log cabin

in Big Boy Northern Alberta and had a happy childhood living amongst my family and community. I did not know that I was poor or deprived until those ideas were placed on me when I went to public school. I realize I came from a caring family and a culture that had values that were different from that of white mainstream society. In my home and community I had many fulfilling and meaningful learning experiences. Unfortunately, our way of life was not valued in mainstream society. Aboriginal students were often viewed from a deficit perspective and measured against Eurocentric standards that were not superior to our own, but just different. It was in school that I felt much of my identity and connection to my family, community and culture was taken from me. Over the years I have worked in education to find ways to include a more truthful and realistic look at Aboriginal people that would help all people appreciate our presence in this country. Many of my efforts have been focused on educating people correctly about who we are as Aboriginal peoples. For example, because of my education I was able to develop a number of courses at the University level that would create opportunities for all people to learn about Aboriginal people from our own perspective and telling. I also wrote a book in 1975 called "Defeathering the Indian", where I tell about the experiences I had as a Métis child in public schools.

Emma LaRocque has been a strong voice for Aboriginal people and a forceful presence amongst Canada's scholarly writers. She has written numerous scholarly and popular articles on images of "Indians" in the media, Canadian history, Native literature, education, racism, and violence against women. Her poetry has appeared in national and international journals and anthologies. She specializes in colonization and its impact on Native/White relations, particularly in the areas of cultural productions and representation. Since 1977, she has been a professor in the Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba. She continues to research colonial interference and Aboriginal resistance strategies in the areas of literature, historiography, representation, identity, gender roles, industrial encroachment on Aboriginal (Indian and Métis) lands and resources, and governance.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

*Bachelor of Arts Masters in Arts, Religious/Peace Studies
Masters in Arts, Canadian History
PhD Aboriginal History/Literature*



HOME COMMUNITY
Legrande, Oregon

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Métis

CURRENT POSITION
*Storyteller, Author, retired teacher, Deacon, past chair
of the Manitoba Federation of Independent schools*

Joe McLellan

When I think about

what inspired me to go after the career choices I made or what experiences helped me get to where I am today, I think of a time when I was thirteen years old. My dad got me a summer job shoveling manure. After my first day of work I decided that I would get a university degree. Sometimes we need those life experiences to help us figure out what we don't want to do for the rest of our life.

I realize, too, that we all have to overcome obstacles to get to where we want to go. For example one of the things that I struggled with was Tourette syndrome. Tourette syndrome usually begins in childhood and is characterized by the presence of multiple physical motor tics- twitching or spasms that can lead to convulsion, and sometimes can include vocal – phonic tics. Although this created stress and obstacles in my life I found a way to deal with it and managed OK. Today, I enjoy teaching because it is rewarding to spend time with children and I enjoy being in an environment where I am always learning.

There are many reasons why you should consider pursuing education as a career. Most importantly, it may be your gift or calling in life. Many people are teachers and sometimes you cannot deny this calling in you. We all have gifts that we need to identify and nurture in ourselves. This is what helps us define our purpose in life and helps us set and reach our goals.



Never give up on a dream!



EDUCATION/TRAINING

I've been in school every year from 1950 till today, as a student, teacher or a consultant... so something from my educational experiences must have rubbed off!

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I teach, share stories, consult, contribute where and when I can to various community initiatives.



HOME COMMUNITY
Peguis First Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Cree

CURRENT POSITION
*Instructional Advisor, Manitoba First Nations
Education Resource Centre*

June Montour

I realize that

we all have obstacles to overcome in our lives to achieve our goals. Personally, I cannot recall having had any major obstacles that kept me from going to school because when I was working on my undergrad degrees I was fortunate to have the support and encouragement from my family. However, I did have to make the decision to leave my community and province to attend the university of my choice. It was a great experience and one that I have never regretted. I also had a very difficult time with mathematics, but one way I overcame this was to focus, focus, focus and of course, attend regular tutoring sessions. Today, within my profession, I love the fact that although I do not teach in the classroom I am still very much involved in education. I also love the fact that I have the opportunity to work with adults in First Nation communities throughout Manitoba.

“Do not be afraid to venture out on your own. There are so many great opportunities out there for Aboriginal youth. Believe in yourself and be proud of your cultural identity.”

There are always people in our lives who inspire us. We just need to take the time to really look at the people around us to admire or appreciate the work they do. I would have to say there were many people who inspired me to be where I am now. Growing up in a First Nation community always led me to believe that we can make our lives better through education and contribute back to our communities so that our communities can be better places to live. I hope to encourage more youth to pursue education as a career because we need more Aboriginal teachers in our communities, particularly teachers in mathematics and science. They will help our youth pursue careers in the areas of health and science. Our communities are in a state of healing, and we need our own people to help us heal.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

*Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education
Currently completing Masters in
Education – Adult Education and
Post Secondary Studies.*

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

*My role is to provide professional support for teachers at the community level who teach
Para-educator courses offered through the MFNERC that is accredited by the University
College of the North (UCN).*



HOME COMMUNITY

St. Claude, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Métis

CURRENT POSITION

Teacher

Jim Partaker

From what I remember

I always had the goal of attending university, even at a young age. There was something in me that knew that if I believed in myself I could achieve the goals I set in my life. My teachers and coaches were my role models who inspired me to pursue my goal of being a teacher. I realize that I had to make an important decision to get where I am today. I really enjoyed track and field but also wanted to pursue my goal of completing university. I chose university and put all my effort into completing my studies. Today, I enjoy my work as an educator because I get to see the achievements of my students and I enjoy watching them grow and excel throughout the school year. I also enjoy the school I teach in. I teach in a small community and appreciate the advantages of knowing everyone.

I believe many other youth would benefit from being a teacher because education has many rewards that are more important than money. To be honest, if money is all you desire then education may not be the field for you. Education is a profession that allows you to build meaningful relationships with many people. It will leave you with many memories that enrich your own life and that allow you give back to society in a meaningful way. If this appeals to you then education is for you. Being an educator continually forces you to be a lifelong learner and opens your mind to new ideas and helps you learn to live life in a good way. I have experienced some successes and some failures, but the experiences I get from working with students will never be forgotten.

I enjoy the opportunity I am given as a teacher to help youth understand the value of education. I also have the opportunity to coach students in many sports. My background in sports has provided me with many opportunities and it has allowed me to

have many wonderful experiences, I can give back those experiences to the students I now coach. There are many things you can do with an Education degree. For example, it has allowed me to coach sports and experience something different other than being in the classroom. My love for coaching has allowed me to coach many different types of sports including football, basketball, soccer, and track and field. Through my Education degree, I have therefore been able to stay involved in sports my whole life. My next goal is to help mentor Aboriginal coaches.

“If you believe you can make a difference in the life of our people then education is the field for you. Keep in mind that you will be challenged but that is part of the beauty of it. Once you overcome these obstacles you get to experience a natural high in life that comes from your own hard work and determination. Your whole life and the gift you give to others may make the difference in creating a better place for all of us. – Meeqwetsh”

I believe that if we train our people to be better coaches we can go a long way to promote positive experiences for our youth in the future. I already see a great improvement in our Aboriginal youth in all sport areas and we need to continue taking it to the next level. I have acquired many new skills throughout my education and experience as a teacher that will help me work towards these new goals.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education,
University of Manitoba

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

I teach elementary physical education, science, social studies art, industrial arts and technology education. I am also a coach of many sports.



HOME COMMUNITY

Shoal Lake #40 First Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Anishinaabe

CURRENT POSITION

Aboriginal Academic Achievement Support Teacher South/Central

Andrea Lynn Redsky

I feel that it was

always my elders who inspired me to go after the profession I am in today. Although placing my children in daycare was a very difficult thing for me to do, I recognize that it was part of a critical decision I had to make in order to get where I am today. My only regret is the time that I did not spend with my children. Today as an educator, I enjoy the rewarding work I do and appreciate that I can work with a variety of teachers from elementary to senior high school. I work with teachers from every curricular area to support the integration of Aboriginal education. I feel it is important for our youth to pursue education as a career because teachers can help our youth aspire to become anything they hope to be. It is important for young people to become educators in order to continue the work that has been started by the trailblazers in education, those who have supported us as we made our own way.

“
Be true to yourself.
Stand strong in your beliefs.
Keep moving forward.
If you get knocked down
by troubles, remember
to get back up and learn
from those tough times.
You can live your dreams!

”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education Degree

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

To support teachers in the south and central districts of the Winnipeg School Division with the implementation of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum.



HOME COMMUNITY
Buffalo, New York

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Mohawk

CURRENT POSITION
Assistant Professor, University of Winnipeg

Brian Rice

My commitment has

always been to the Aboriginal community first. I began my career as a high school teacher in a band controlled school and interim principal for one year. In fact, my entire teacher training occurred while I was employed in a band-run school.

My own teaching and learning experiences have always maintained an Aboriginal focus. This has helped me make contributions to what teachers and students can now use when they learn about Aboriginal peoples. For example, my dissertation included a seven hundred mile walk following the traditions of my people, the Mohawk. It was called *The Rotinonshonni through the Eyes of Teharonhiawako and Sawiskera – A Traditional History of the Iroquois People for Modern Times*. My doctorate focused on traditional knowledge. I am proud to say that I graduated from what was the only all-Aboriginal doctoral program in the world, with a doctoral committee that included both Aboriginal elders and academics.

Today, I recognize that, more and more, teachers are required to teach Aboriginal content in the curriculum. It is, therefore, important for teachers to be prepared to teach this content as well as they can. We therefore need more Aboriginal students to broaden the canon of Aboriginal education. As an educator, I have had the opportunity to write materials that can be used by students and teachers for such purposes. For example, I have written two books: *Seeing with Aboriginal Eyes: A Four-Directional Perspective on Human and Non-human Values, Cultures and Relationships on Turtle Island* and, more recently, *Encounters between Newcomers and Aboriginal People in the East*. I wrote this book for history teachers from across Canada who attended the 2005 Historica Secondary School Teachers' Institute at The University of Winnipeg. I write my books for the courses I teach, to help my students –the teachers of tomorrow– learn about Aboriginal culture, history, and global issues from an Aboriginal perspective. I am currently converting my manual on Indigenous environmental science into a book. I have also

written for the National Library of Canada's Kids Settlement Site and have just had a chapter published in the *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution* (Sandole, et. al [Eds.], [2008], Routledge) called "Restorative processes of peace and healing within the governing structures of the Rotinonshonni 'Longhouse People'."

It is rewarding as an educator to help teachers better understand Canadian Aboriginal culture, history and perspectives. What I have noticed is that, when it comes to integrating

"I hope that by understanding where we are today and after going through that whole residential school era, we understand that there is the possibility of not having to lose everything. We no longer have to give up everything about who we are in order to fit into and succeed in the modern western society."

Aboriginal perspectives, teachers are afraid that they are going to go into a classroom and do something wrong or inappropriate. As an Aboriginal educator, I am able to assist these teachers by answering their questions, by coaching them, and by encouraging their efforts. I also believe it's important to share my work with non-Aboriginal people just as it is with Aboriginal peoples.

As an educator I have been able to work internationally with other Indigenous people. I have visited the Bedouin in Israel, the Makuche and Wapashan in Guyana, the Karen in Thailand, Indigenous Hawaiians in Hawaii, Mayans in Mexico. During my stays, I have taught Native Studies courses or given lectures on Aboriginal issues within Canada and the United States. It has been rewarding and enlightening to travel as an educator. I have come to recognize that, while some Indigenous groups are still living a subsistence lifestyle, others are struggling with advanced stages of colonization. Today, as an educator I plan to delve more into experiential learning by encouraging students to move beyond text and theory and into the environment with naturalist skills such as tracking.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education
Masters - Religious Studies
PhD - Traditional Knowledge

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching Aboriginal education perspectives, history.

“

We need positive role models.

Why not you?

”



HOME COMMUNITY

Peguis First Nation: Old Peguis Reserve that was known as St. Peter's Reservation, geographically located in present day Selkirk, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Anishinaabe

CURRENT POSITION

Recently retired

Garry Robson

When I think back

to my experiences as a student I can't recall learning positive things about myself as an Aboriginal person. What I did learn was that there were many negative stereotypes about Aboriginal people. This was very problematic to my development as a young person because these experiences were affecting how I was feeling about myself and took shape in how I thought I should live as an Aboriginal man. It was my Elders and my Traditional teachers who helped me see the problem in how I ended up this way. They helped me see that the stories I heard in school and about my people were not true, that we had many beautiful things to be proud of as Anishinaabe people. It was because of them that I was able to see myself in a different light. It was because of their stories that I was able to see strength and a resource in my culture that could help me live a better life. It felt good to finally learn there was more to us than what I was told. There was this whole other side that I had not learnt yet of who I was and could be. This new learning connected me to things that countered what I was taught in school.

They also told me that I had an important decision to make now that I was well aware of who I really was as an Anishinaabe man. With this new knowledge, I could no longer go on living my life the way I was. I could not say my life was bad because of what I learned in school because they had now shown me something different. I could now choose between that old life, that lived up to the stereotypes I was fed or I could embrace what I had learned from my elders and continue living a good life. They told me to decide who I wanted to be. That story and those experiences I had with the elders have always stayed with me and I have tried to bring this type of learning into the work I have done as an Aboriginal educator throughout the years.

I have tried to find ways to bring the knowledge, perspectives and teachings of our people to the education system so that all students could experience a true account of our history. Our truth is in our stories and it is through storytelling that I have tried to demystify the stereotypes about Aboriginal people and our experience here on Turtle Island. For Aboriginal students, I always hoped our students would learn about their histories, cultures and perspectives in a good way which would help them

feel good about themselves. For non-Aboriginal students and teachers I hoped to help them understand the effects that education and assimilative practices have had on Aboriginal peoples. I hoped this new knowledge would create opportunities for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to improve our social conditions to create a better relationship between us all. Overall, I hoped that through my efforts I could affect learners' attitudes towards themselves and between each other.

I remember being told that Aboriginal people didn't have an education system before the coming of the white man (Europeans). My Elders helped me see that we did have our ways of teaching our people. It is important to help teachers understand this because this type of thinking can lead to a low expectation for Aboriginal children: the misconception that Aboriginal parents and students don't value education because they had none. It is important to see that as Aboriginal people we had a very sophisticated and practical education system that allowed us to thrive in our environments. Our education was constantly unfolding and changing and it was not restricted to learning in a classroom. Our people used everything around them to teach and to learn from. Finding a way to merge these two different world views and ways of teaching and learning into one teachable moment has been both rewarding and a challenge in education.

Memorable moments in my career include spending time with students. I remember one time a child came forward to announce that he was Aboriginal. This was a heartwarming experience because I saw it as a new beginning for that child. He had heard something in what I said that gave him the courage to free him from that which kept him from being open about his identity. Like the stories that were told to me by my Elders I believe stories have the ability to empower our students. They plant seeds of self pride. Our schools should be places that help all students feel good about themselves. Our Anishinaabe ways provide opportunities for all people to feel good about themselves as human beings. This is what we need our young people to share with others in the education system.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

*Bachelor of Education.
Most of my education has come from traditional and cultural learning environments.*

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Recently retired Aboriginal Education Consultant for the Aboriginal Education Directorate, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. Currently Elder in Residence, Aboriginal Student Centre, University of Manitoba



HOME COMMUNITY
Duck Bay, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Teacher, Duck Bay School

Fred Sanderson

My story begins

with the land. I was born and raised in Duck Bay, Manitoba. It was here that I developed a great respect and love for the outdoors as I was a trapper, commercial fisherman and hunter. I was able to provide for my family living a traditional lifestyle for many years. Unfortunately I had to leave this love because the mismanagement and depletion of resources within our communities. This led me to consider how else I could provide for my family and contribute to my community.

I have always maintained a strong connection to the land and my learning continued as I became involved in academic learning. I realize that I had to take what my elders taught me and combine that with an academic education. I wanted

to find a way to combine the best of both worlds to help me be the best teacher I could be in the classroom and the best person I could be in the community. As a traditional teacher I pass on the stories of our land that students can directly relate to. This is what I feel has helped me be successful because for me as an Anishinaabe Métis living off the land, it is our Aboriginal belief system that has provided a strong foundation for me. These teachings created a strong sense of knowing where I came from, which helped me move forward in life and bring something back to my community.

I also have a great respect for the role young people play in the lives of our community. As a teacher I feel it is my responsibility to guide the work that our young people must carry on with. It is not my job to show them what to do but to nurture their own ideas. I believe we need to provide more support for young people to help overcome some of the major issues that keep our young people from participating in our communities the way they should.

Look at what has been left for us by our ancestors. Their stories and teachings will help us find our way into the future.

Unfortunately, I see that there is no place for them in our communities. With the little resources or outlets, some of our youth end up selling or taking drugs. It is a false sense of success when money or happiness is made this way. In the end they really lose more than they think they gain. Hopefully, before it's too late, they will realize that these things hurt our families and communities because everything comes full circle. We have to help students understand that we are all interconnected and therefore we are all affected by what we do. We have to restore the traditional teachings such as the Seven Sacred Anishinaabe teachings that will restore our sense of place, and a need for respect, love, trust and caring amongst us. Unfortunately, these things are not always taught in public education which is why as Aboriginal people we must find ways to bring this type of teaching and learning back to what we teach our children in school. As a teacher in a public school I take pride in the fact that I make efforts to bring these teachings back to young people and I am also able to share the teachings with other educators.

If you look at many of our successful Aboriginal leaders throughout Manitoba, you will find in their stories that they have maintained a connection to their traditional roots. It is through ceremony, and practicing traditional teachings that they gain the strength to do the work they do.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education,
University of Manitoba

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Teacher of all subject areas for grades 8 & 9



HOME COMMUNITY

*St. Peter's: Little
Peguis Indian Reserve,
or Selkirk, Manitoba*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Anishinaabe

CURRENT POSITION

*Instructor, The University of Winnipeg & Columnist,
Urban NDN Newspaper*

Niigonwedom James Sinclair

As an educator,

I love being a part of a learning process where along with my students I can learn a new idea, skill, and/or approach to the world. Watching someone take a risk and trying something they learned is a gift that never ends. My road to becoming an educator (like most) has included many stops and starts, several internal and external obstacles, and too many self-imposed barriers, including financial, personal, political, and spiritual issues I have had to overcome. While we don't ever overcome all barriers, trying to keep the old ones at bay while getting prepared to face new ones is a constant struggle.

My parents are my biggest supporters and critics, and I love them for it. My sisters also keep me sharp, grounded, and honest.

In grade three I had a teacher, Mr. Peters, who made me feel like a million bucks every day, and I realized then how much power the person at the front of the room had. In 2003 I read Craig Womack's incredible book, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* and it changed my entire career path. Nowadays, though, my partner and daughter are all I live for. I do everything with, for, and because of them.

When asked about critical choices or decisions that helped me get where I am today many things come to mind. I think about kindergarten when I stole a toy car from a boy in my class or when in Junior High I stayed silent when my classmates made fun of a girl because of her clothes and her "smell." Both decisions were formative moments in guilt and regret that I continue to live with. In 1993 and 1997 I travelled as an exchange student to South Africa and Sri Lanka – expanding my knowledge and maturity by leaps and bounds. In 2000, I took my first teaching job as a Drama/English teacher at Ecole Kelvin High School, a choice that involved tremendous personal cost – but paid off in the end. Three years later, I had to make a decision whether to pursue graduate studies and confront the systemic racism and oppression I complained

about every day. This accompanied my decision to join a Mide-wiwin lodge, which freed my mind and spirit in ways I am still learning. But the most difficult decision I've had is to be the best father I can be. My life radically altered due to that choice.

When I think about what has been significant in my own educational journey I think of my grandfather, who suffered deeply from alcoholism. For most of his life he was not someone to be proud of. From his anger, which many from his generation

Lighting the Eighth Fire is something we all have to do as Anishinaabeg. We cannot expect elders, language speakers, and traditional peoples to do it for us. We must use the tools we now have to live our lives and continue our cultural communities, families, and nations. That is how we will live, expand, and thrive as First Nations peoples – not just survive.

inherited from colonialism, he abused himself, others, and the world around him. I'm told he also made some tremendously bad choices, which cost him dearly. But when I was born, my grandfather - with a little help from my parents - chose to never let me see him drink. It wasn't easy I'm sure, but I believe this is what led him to a sober existence for the final two decades of his life. As a result, I have only known a beautiful, gentle, and funny *Anishnaabe nimiishomis*, not the side I have heard about. Although I know now that "other side" existed, he chose to give me the gifts of respect, love, and honor – something he couldn't do with alcohol. These are the most important teachings anyone has ever given me. His one decision, in the interests of making one other person's world a better place, proves that such a choice can have incredible impact. All anyone has to do is have the courage to make such a decision. I carry that responsibility in every choice I make, every day. I'm very proud of my grandfather, the most inspirational man I know. I would not be anywhere without him.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Arts-Honors, Winnipeg
Bachelor of Education, Winnipeg
Masters in Education, Oklahoma
Ph.D., British Columbia - pending

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Writing, grading, networking, researching, lecturing, group facilitation, meeting with students, committee/curriculum work, editing, submitting work for publication, peer reviewing, colleague collaboration, conferencing, full-time daddying too!



HOME COMMUNITY
*Matlock Manitoba,
Father: Peguis,
Mother: Fisher River*

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Cree

CURRENT POSITION
Administrator - Public School

Sheila Spooner

I enjoy the work I do

as an educator because I am able to interact with students, teachers, and parents. I also enjoy working in the classroom where I can ask students what they are learning and share information about Aboriginal people, their culture, history, and perspectives. My overall goal is to work to promote Aboriginal education and awareness at all levels within the system.

There are obstacles we all have to overcome to achieve our goals in life. I faced many struggles. I came from an abusive and alcoholic home environment and eventually was made a ward of the court. Although I was moved through thirteen foster homes, my desire to achieve a good education for myself and to make a better place for Aboriginal students within the system has remained strong. Many times I have felt that I have been misunderstood. I have had to deal with such things as racism and prejudice, but I continue to try and teach about our way of life, our culture, and our values.

Several people in my life have pushed and supported me to pursue a higher education and to maintain my course of action. I am thankful for this support. My mother was one of these people. She was very clear that we were to strive to do our best, that we were not to complain about life, and that we should make sure we got out and made a difference. The Persowich family from Sundown, Manitoba, and Claudette Dupont were also very instrumental in keeping this drive towards excellence fresh and focused. My father was very determined that my education emphasized the traditional survival skills. To this day, I practice traditional skills like filleting, snaring and preparing foods from the wild. This education is invaluable and something that as a community we are losing. Our children are swiftly moving towards technology and away from a traditional lifestyle. Some may never experience this type of survival based education which many of us grew up with. One day this may be our greatest regret.

I have had to make many critical decisions to get where I am today. For example, I made the choice to stay in school and to make some major life changes. I realized I had to live a drug- and alcohol-free life and that I would have to continue to strengthen my character. Today, I further my education every chance I get. I try to be mindful of the values that we were taught, and I always remember to treat people respectfully.

Remember to stay true to your values and beliefs even when you are feeling as if you are under attack. Hold your head high and be the best person you can be. Never lose your Aboriginal perspective. That is what makes you special, and know that your struggles in life will make you a source of knowledge for others. Share with those who are sincere in their wish to learn about our culture and way of being. Ignore the people who are still stuck in prejudice for they will waste your energy and time. Remember to laugh and be healthy. It will bring you peace.

I believe it is important that we have more Aboriginal role models within the school system. We need more Aboriginal teachers, support teachers, and administrators to lead the way. For example, as an Aboriginal person working in an urban school division, I recognize that the institutions try to make the person fit within them, when in reality; education should be about adapting and nurturing individuals in their own pursuit of education. Together, through introducing and incorporating an Aboriginal perspective, we can help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students chart a path to life-long success. Without more visible and successful role models, our community will continue to score the lowest, achieve the least, and be the least successful citizens. We need youth to stay in school, to become contributing members of society because each person can individually make a difference.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education
Masters in Education
Currently pursuing my
PhD - University of Manitoba

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Work with N-8 students and Teachers



HOME COMMUNITY

Matheson Island on Lake
Winnipeg, Selkirk, Cranberry
Portage, The Pas, Cross Lake.
Member of Sagkeeng
First Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Ojibwe - Cree

CURRENT POSITION

Research & Development Specialist with Manitoba First Nations
Education Resource Centre

Dan Thomas

Giizhibaaawasi Makwa ndAnishinaabewinikaas, Waabishkima'iingun

As a student

I chose to stay in school, even when it was most irrelevant and boring. I followed what I wanted to learn about the most and never gave up. I realized that change can only come through education and through educating all people. I believe that when enough people know the truth there is a political will to make change happen. This is why it is important for our youth to pursue education. A significant part of my own educational journey was accepting that traditional, spiritual leaders had knowledge that was important to the formation of our First Nations identity. It is this information that needs to be sought out and brought into the education system. Nora Ross really inspired me to pursue education. She currently works for the Province of Manitoba, and is originally from Berens River. Nora was a girls' counselor at the residence in Cranberry Portage around 1970-71. She read an editorial I wrote in the school newspaper on how to teach and thought I would be a good teacher. At first the school guidance counselor tore up the university application Nora had given me with the admonishment that "teaching elementary school is women's work." Nora promptly got another application for me, we filled it out and the rest, as they say, is history. My career in education has been very long. I remember a time early in my teaching career when, under the authority of non- First Nations bosses, people

were afraid of teaching students about their heritage. Today this fear still exists. Many non-Aboriginal people, including some of our First Nations people who follow a Christian faith, are uncomfortable about teaching our heritage. Yet nothing in the teachings of Christ, nor in the denominations that try to follow his teachings, says, "Thou shall not sweat," or "Thou shall not honor the Creator in the way of your people." So fear of change is the biggest obstacle I have dealt with in my work as an Aboriginal educator.

Today I enjoy my current position because it allows me to meet with elders and other traditional knowledge keepers to do the research necessary to support my work and position. I also enjoy creating and delivering presentations and providing information to teachers which they can use to portray our people in a positive way. This is information that helps Aboriginal students feel a sense of pride.

“When the truth is brought out by a person, and others pick up on that message, great change can happen. It doesn't happen overnight, but over the course of one's life one can observe tremendous change because we persevere.”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

I received a permanent teaching certificate at Brandon University.

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

To research and develop teaching materials for First Nations schools. We have just completed a document titled "First Nations Teachings and Practices", as well as a set of Ojibwe values posters in Ojibwe, also translated into English.



“Go out there and find your culture, identity, language and fulfill your dreams and aspirations. Become successful leaders, teachers in whatever career choice or decision you make in your lives. Remember to never stop trying; even when everything seems to get tough or when you struggle. Stand up tall, be proud of who you are and never give up. The greatest thing you can do to help yourself is to believe in yourself and know that we all have the courage to be great. If you have dreams, chase them; there is nothing you can't do if you follow your gifts. If at first you do not succeed, try, and try again. We fail only when we fail to try. The second time is always easier. The choice is yours and we all can be successful!”

HOME COMMUNITY
Waterhen, Manitoba

CULTURAL IDENTITY
Anishinaabe Métis

CURRENT POSITION
Aboriginal Education Consultant/Aboriginal Academic Achievement Support Teacher Inner City and North District schools.

Geraldine Whitford

My story begins

in a small Métis community with the Ojibway language and customs. I come from a family of twelve and both my parents, David and Helen Campbell, are fluent Ojibway speakers. Growing up in a community surrounded by rivers, lakes, forests and rocks was very important to me. I realize that experiencing nature and being a part of it daily helped me understand that we are all inter-connected. It also made us much closer as a community. My parents taught us a lot of good teachings, as well as how to work. We lived and survived off the land, we hunted, fished, trapped and gardened. This was a very healthy way of life when I was growing up and it has made me what I am today.

I remember as a student the feeling that I may not be successful. The supports from family and friends helped me to overcome my fears. Their support helped me complete my education degree. Over the years, with all my positive supports, I developed courage, along with hope and perseverance to fulfill my dreams and to go on and never give up. One of the greatest things I did to encourage myself was to go speak to my Elders. This usually involved having conversations with my father and mother, my uncle (Pat Campbell), and my aunts (Margaret McIntyre and Clara Aneechin). They are my mentors and through their walk of life and sharing of wisdom, they gave me courage and guidance to walk a good life. They encouraged me and told me I could be successful too.

My parents and family members are very important to me. I have a great family who really encouraged and supported me. I remember my grade one and grade five teachers as very good role models. I wanted to be a teacher like them. They had good qualities, they were kind, caring and had a good sense of humour. They told me that someday I was going to be successful with the abilities I had. I felt special and proud of what they shared with me and deep down I carried their messages and believed that I would make it come true. I therefore believe I had good mentors, but in order to be successful I had to find myself as an Anishinabe woman. I had to make the right choices for myself and family.

I graduated in October, 1998 with a four-year Bachelor of Education degree through Brandon University. In 2002, I then applied to the University of Manitoba to complete a post-baccalaureate in Education and graduated in October, 2004. I am currently enrolled at the University of Manitoba and plan to pursue a Master's degree in Aboriginal Education.

As an educator I have had a wonderful ten years of great learning experiences. Within my current position I support initiatives in the new and existing curricula by integrating Aboriginal perspectives for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. I provide students and teachers with the necessary skills to develop a better understanding and respect for the history, culture, traditional values and knowledge of Aboriginal people. The purpose of my position is to provide Aboriginal perspectives that are integrated rather than having isolated activities taught sporadically.

I enjoy being able to share my knowledge, experience, and gifts as an educator. It is rewarding to know that I am making a difference in a person's life. I take pride in my work and this gives me a great sense of accomplishment. My journey as an educator and also as an Anishinabe woman makes me feel very proud of who I am. Having been given the opportunity to develop positive relationships with colleagues, students and fellow community supports will definitely allow me to grow and help strengthen Aboriginal education.

It is very important for our youth to pursue education as a career, because of our time and place in this world. With the hardships we encounter as Aboriginal people, we need to continue to work harder to survive in our changing society. It is important to choose a career where you can share your talents, gifts and values as a person. Teaching is a profession that helps children understand the diversity of cultures and values that make our country strong. It is a career that will allow you to make a difference in a child's life just like your favorite teacher may have made in yours.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education,
Post Bachelorette

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

To assist schools, administrators, teachers and students by providing them with supports for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives.



HOME COMMUNITY

*St. James Assiniboia,
Winnipeg, Manitoba*

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Aboriginal - Canadian

CURRENT POSITION

Grade four classroom teacher

Jennifer Lee Jane Williams

I have wanted to be

a teacher ever since I was young. It began when I was in grade two because I wanted to be like my teacher. She was organized, kind and fun. I also enjoyed learning. But the most notable experience that pushed me to be a teacher was being a mentor to my two younger sisters throughout their childhood. It was magical to see them grow and to be a part of that. I wanted to be able to relive that magic by helping other children experience the joy of learning. Today as a teacher I love that I continue to learn. I love to share the gift of knowledge with others and with my students.

I realize that I had to overcome obstacles in order to become a teacher. For example, it was difficult to make the leap to attend university. Initially, I did not see university as a real option for me. I had no close family or friends who attended university and I had no money to pay for it. However, I was unhappy with the few job opportunities available without higher education and after a few years of working and living on my own I pushed myself to apply to university. I went for my dream even though I knew it would be tough. I now realize that university opened up a lot of doors for me. I not only had more career options, I also met all kinds of different people who came from different backgrounds and who offered different perspectives. My life has become richer as a result of these experiences and now I am able to inspire others to go for their dreams.

“*Have faith in yourself
and go for your dreams.
Never stop learning.*”

EDUCATION/TRAINING

*Bachelor of Arts and
Bachelor of Education*

ROLE/RESPONSIBILITIES

As a teacher I am a role model for children. Each day this school year I am directly responsible for creating a safe and caring place of learning for twenty-three children. I am challenged to consider their hopes, dreams, fears, strengths, weaknesses, and any needs that they may have. I look at each student individually and consider how we may work together collectively to gain a better understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

I have fond memories

of my early childhood days living with my parents, extended family and siblings. Life was beautiful until it was marred when my oldest brother, Allen at age seven was taken to St. Mary's Residential School. I soon found out that my siblings and I would eventually follow the same route. Summer and Christmas holidays were really special because that was when my whole family was together once again. Being the third eldest of the children, I had many responsibilities and learned at an early age to care for my younger siblings. I took great pride in being our mother's right hand girl. My father, mother us seven children are all survivors of the Residential School system.

Since my school did not teach beyond grade-eight, my parents approached the Indian Agent about sending me to a high school. They were told that I had to stay at the Residential School until my 16th birthday and that if they insisted on sending me to a high school; they would be responsible for my tuition, books, all school supplies, room and board. Since my parents did not want to deny me the opportunity of following my dream of a nursing career, they registered me at Lacombe Home Private School in Calgary, Alberta. This is when I became the first St. Mary's graduate to attend a non-First Nation high school. Although I had to leave home again, this time it was my decision to realize my dream.



HOME COMMUNITY

Blood Reserve,
Cardston, Alberta

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Blood First Nation

CURRENT POSITION

Retired - Part time Counseling

Flora Zaharia

At Lacombe Home, I was the only First Nation student in our classroom of Grades 7-9. My excitement was soon drowned in tears when I saw that the stack of books issued to the Grades 7 and 8 were books totally unfamiliar to me. This is when I felt like a fish out of water. My teacher took me aside to find out the problem. She reassured me that it was not my fault that I was in such a situation and explained to me that the Residential Schools were given the option to follow the provincial curriculum or the curriculum issued from Ottawa if they did not have qualified teachers. Unfortunately, Indian Affairs at that time did not believe that First Nations children would ever pursue higher education. It became clear to me then, the reason why studying at St. Mary's was so easy. Knowing that I needed a better academic foundation, my teacher gave me the option of repeating Grade 7 and 8 or take 2 years for Grade 9. She also emphasized that all Grade 9 students must write the Alberta Department of Education final exams. Three years to get to Grade 10 was just too much for me, so I decided to take Grade 9 for 2 years. At that point, my teacher issued me Grade 7 and 8 Math., Science and Language Arts texts and told me to follow these two grades when she is teaching them and if I needed extra help, she would be there. Furthermore, she explained my situation to the total class and gave them permission to help me whenever possible.

I often reminded myself that my parents were spending so much money for my education: money that was being taken away from my whole family's use, especially my siblings. This thought always spurred me on to work harder, to complete all assignments, to achieve good marks and to reach my career goal so that the money would not be wasted. Whenever, I would mention to my parents that so much money was being spent on me, they would remind me that during the summer holidays, I too, contributed to the farm work, so selling more cattle and pigs to pay for my education was the family's wish. With hard work and help from my teacher and classmates, I passed the Departmental exams that first year and returned to Lacombe Home for three more years to complete high school. By this time, my calling to a nursing career had switched to education. I was accepted at the University of Alberta from where I received my Standard Teaching Certificate and was one of eleven student-teachers who received an award for passing the practicum with Honors.

My first school was in Grouard, Alberta and to this day, some of my former students still keep in touch. I completed my Bachelor of Education degree through correspondence and summer schools at the University of Alberta. Later, I received my Masters in Education from the University of Manitoba. In those days, during the late 40's and 50's, I was often the only First Nation teacher in a school. My great love for teaching inspired me to forge ahead in spite of many obstacles; even discrimination did not deter me to persevere. At Teachers' conventions, I used to scan faces hoping to meet another First Nation teacher; however, there never was one.

I want all you students to know that if I was able to accomplish my dreams under very difficult circumstances, you too can do likewise. Once you set your goals, do everything to reach them, no matter how many obstacles are along the way. Remember, our Creator helps those who help themselves.

As an Aboriginal educator, I have been fortunate to have been involved in many new developments. I have also worked hard to advocate for change in different areas and levels of the education system. Since my arrival in Winnipeg, in 1957, I have taught two-years in Norway House, at six schools in Winnipeg, at the Universities of Manitoba, Brandon and British Columbia. I have written 4 volumes of Elders Stories from my home reserve, coordinated the development of Mokakit Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Curriculum K-8 and was the first woman Director of the former Native Education Branch, a position I held for nine-years. I have volunteered on numerous boards and I am a founding member of the Keteyatsak Elders and Seniors Inc. Presently, I enjoy counseling at Yellowquill College twice a week

There are so many individuals who have helped me along the way, however, I maintain that God, our Creator has helped and guided me through difficult and happy days. I thank our Creator for having given me a good life with a wonderful family and many good and true friends.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Bachelor of Education,
Masters in Education

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Counselor Yellowquill College – twice a week.



Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy
Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
Aboriginal Education Directorate

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