

NWAC President's Report

This publication highlights the various activities the President has undertaken throughout the month of September.



LORRAINE WHITMAN

Lorraine Whitman was elected as the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada on September 14, 2019. Prior to her presidency at NWAC, Ms. Whitman served as President of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and has been advocating for Indigenous women's rights over the past 45 years.

September President's Report

My Dear Friends,

The month of September represents one of the warmest welcomes for both new and returning students across the country. Although COVID-19 still has an impact, I feel that the world is beginning to return to normal, slowly. I had the pleasure of welcoming students in person this year at Acadia University and was met with a group of eager students ready to take on the world once again!



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-09-07 ...
Welcome to all students at @AcadiaU - my best to all of you as you work towards your dreams and aspirations! #acadiau #WISEacadia



You and Peter Ricketts

I reached out to all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women who were deciding whether they would vote in the federal election, which took place on September 20, 2021. Through workshops, social media posts, and in-person advocations, I urged all to vote.

The message was clear: you may think that one vote will make little or no difference. But many individual races for seats in Parliament are won or lost by just a handful of votes. Your voice matters. All our voices matter.



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-09-13 ...
Get out and vote, wear your ribbon skirt and/or shirt. Show that Indigenous people are important and we take this election seriously! We're done asking for action, we're voting in #elxn44 #cdnpoli



As members of sovereign nations, some First Nations women have no interest in voting to elect members of the colonizer government. That is a position we respect. Each of us must follow our own path. But there is another position we have taken at NWAC about our democratic right to vote.

We believe the only way we can make a difference in the lives of our families, and the people in our communities, is by doing what we can to guide the colonial powers of Canada

in the direction we want them to go.

We cannot leave these serious human rights issues to our descendants. The time to deal with them is now.

Yes, we hope one day that the current political system will be dismantled and replaced by one that is founded on equality, trust, and mutual respect. But, until that happens, this is the only federal government we have, and we believe we must choose to do what we can to work within it.

For that reason, I asked you to vote for the candidate who you believe will work hardest on your behalf, and on behalf of the other Indigenous women of Canada. I am asking our women to put on their ribbon skirt, or beaded shirt, and go to the polling station. I wore my own ribbon skirt with pride when I cast my ballot.

This month was also the first official statutory holiday for Canadians marking the annual Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I am pleased that Ottawa has checked off another Call to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) by declaring this new federal statutory holiday. But I suspect many Canadians do not know what truth they are being asked to reflect upon or what acts of reconciliation they are being asked to perform. I cannot answer those questions on behalf of every Indigenous person in this country.

We each have our own thoughts about the meaning of this day.

From my perspective, it is a day about honouring the victims of a program of assimilation that was perpetrated against the First Peoples of this country by its founding fathers and their confederates. It is about remembering those who survived the residential school experience and those who perished. It is about recognizing the great harms that are inflicted when people of one race determine that their culture and way of life are superior to that of another, and attempt to impose those values. But it is more than that. It is about acknowledging that this land was not uninhabited when the first Europeans arrived on its shores, and that Indigenous cultures were thriving until settlers embarked upon their course of subjugation. It is about understanding that every ounce of ore taken from this ground, every tree cut from the forests, every fish pulled from a lake or adjacent ocean is being taken from territory that we have shared with you.

It is about accepting that, in return for that bounty, we have been subjected to racism and discrimination. We have been treated like second-class citizens in our own lands.

And, in the case of the residential schools, our children were taken from us to be abused physically, sexually, and emotionally. In thousands of cases, as many of you learned this spring when unmarked graves were found on the sites of some of those former institutions of brutality, our children never came home.

You may say that was then and this is now. The last residential school closed in 1996 (or 1998, depending on how you count it.) But their legacy lives on, in the pain that forever changed the lives of former students, in the trauma that is passed to their children and grandchildren, and in the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities that never fully recovered.

The residential schools are not the only reasons why Indigenous Peoples are so disadvantaged today, compared to the rest of the population of this affluent country. But they are a major factor. By inflicting their emotional damage, they contributed to our poverty. They robbed many of us of our heritage and our culture. They left us outsiders in our own land.

That is our truth.

Now, what about reconciliation? That is more difficult. But it can happen. And ordinary Canadians, not just Indigenous Peoples, will help to drive change. We know that because we have heard from large numbers of you who say you want the human rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people to be respected, you want your country to live up to its promises of equity and justice.

I have been asking Canadians to take the time to read the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But that is where the actions that will lead to reconciliation are laid out. Most are aimed at governments and other public institutions. We can continue to urge our government to act. You can write a letter in support of the Native Women's Association of Canada's call to have the perpetrators of the crimes at the residential schools—the government and the churches that ran the institutions—declared criminally responsible for the deaths of the children who were in their care. You can demand that all the Calls to Action are met.

September is also about Orange Shirt Day. The annual Orange Shirt Day on September 30 opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of residential schools. It is an opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of the schools and the legacy they have left behind; to create bridges with each other for reconciliation. It's a day for survivors and those who have been affected to be reaffirmed that they matter. Every child matters, even those who are now adults.



Lorraine Whitman @... · 2021-09-30 ···

Join all of us in commemoration of Sept 30th, Orange Shirt Day. Will you share how you will be commemorating? ❤️

[#orangeshirtday](#)
[#truthandreconciliation](#)
[#everychildmatters](#)



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The date was chosen for two reasons: it was the time of year when children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year. It is an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools, and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come.

As you know, many bodies of our children have been discovered at various residential school locations across the country. The Government of Canada estimates that more than 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were separated from their families during Canada's use of the residential school system. The TRC estimated that more than 4,100 students died in these schools of disease, but the organization says the actual toll could be much higher. "The exact number of children who died at school may never be known, but the death rates for many schools, particularly during times of epidemic or disease, were very high," according to the TRC's [Missing Children Project](#).

Resolutions have been passed in support of Orange Shirt Day by local governments, school districts, and First Nations in the Cariboo and beyond. The AFN Chiefs-in-Council passed a resolution declaring Orange Shirt Day "a first step in reconciliation" and pledging to bring the message home as well as to the Government of Canada and the churches responsible. Several provincial governments have also proclaimed Orange Shirt Day. And, in March 2019, the Government of Canada passed a bill designating September 30 as National Truth and Reconciliation Day. Unfortunately, that bill died in the Senate.

On September 30, we called upon humanity to listen with open ears to the stories of survivors and their families, and to remember those who didn't make it.

Wela'lin


President Lorraine Whitman
 [@LWhitman_NWAC](#)

My September Agenda

Acadia Youth Mural

The mural at Acadia University was created by an Indigenous local youth concerned and involved in climate change and the effects of the bees and how they are so important to our environment. She was involved in a mural on how our Creator has made the four seasons. Local artists working on this mural showed the importance of man and animal living on the Earth. The mural draws a correlation between the bee heading towards extinction and Indigenous women being murdered.



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-09-14 · ...

Our youth are our future generation and they are making changes in strides. Let's respect and support our youth. They have so much to offer! #YouthToday #Indigenous #



Peter Ricketts @a... · 2021-09-11

Honoured to be present with Lily-Beth Fisher of Glooscap FN at the unveiling of the original painting by Mi'kmaw artist Quentin Syliboy that will be the logo for @AcadiaU Mawio'mi, & the start of the Mural Project at the @IrvingCentre.



Social Media Video Creation

In celebration of September and a new school year beginning, a charitable organization called Benevity and I created a public video on why education is vital to the reconciliation process involving NWAC, our organization, and truth and reconciliation.



Purple Faceless Doll Workshop

Purple is the colour of healing. I hosted a workshop on creating purple faceless dolls to show that our missing and murdered mothers, daughters, aunties, and grandmothers are not forgotten.



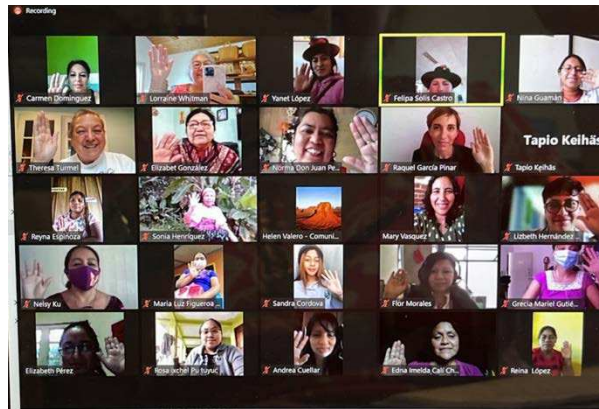
This is one step on our healing journey to honour and commemorate them.

ITAC, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

I attended a day-long event by ITAC on forging the future for Indigenous tourism in Canada. The goal of the event was to support an Indigenous-led strategy and offer Indigenous-led solutions to ensure timely and effective recovery for Indigenous tourism in Canada. What is our future for Indigenous tourism? What are the economic impacts to Indigenous tourism? What has been the impacts of COVID-19 to Indigenous tourism across Canada? To support the rebuilding of an Indigenous-led tourism strategy in Canada, the event sought the commitment of partners to attend next two ITAC meetings; establish a joint agenda for success; and create an investment roadmap for 2022–2025.

Last Virtual ECMIA Event: Continental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas

The last two meetings focused on policies, regulatory frameworks, access to justice, as well as articulation and advocacy. It was an honour to be asked to participate in these sessions, and to be asked to conduct the opening and closing prayers.



Acadia Event

I helped to welcome new and returning students and gave the opening remarks at Acadia University's September session, alongside Dr. Peter J. Ricketts, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University. There were approximately 1,000 in the audience.

Voters Workshop

I hosted and held three voters workshops as well as social media videos to encourage and educate our Indigenous women to vote.

Global News Zoom, APTN News, CHEZ Media: Elections Interviews

The election debates did not, in my opinion, touch on Indigenous women's issues. I had been looking for a debate on the MMIWG, residential school children, and reconciliation, but no significant attention was given to these areas. I addressed these in media interviews on the election.



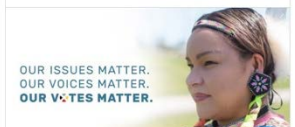
Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-09-07 ...
I will be hosting a voting workshop today at 2 pm EST. Visit nwac.ca to register and I look forward to seeing you there!
#CanadaVotes #DoneAsking

Virtual Book Launch Event of *We are the Sacred Feminine Rising*

The feminine collective has arisen and reclaimed its power. At a microcosmic level, these stories tell of deep wounds and struggles; challenges that are overcome with resilience and courage. These amazing women tapped into their inner strength, embraced their sacred Divine Feminine, and rose to healing from wounded womanhood on a global level. Thirteen resilient and diverse women share their personal life stories full of pain, love, heartbreak, and triumph. Through each chapter, you will hear how they navigated their life's voyage to cross an ocean of challenges to emerge triumphant, empowered, and ready to heal the world. Hear how they healed in their pain and power from within their healed childhood wounds.

NWAC @NWA... · 2021-09-04

To vote at the polls, you'll need to come prepared with identification. Not sure what ID to bring? Visit nwac.ca to review your options. Ensure Indigenous women's issues are prioritized in #elxn44 by voting on or before election day (Sept 20). #DoneAsking



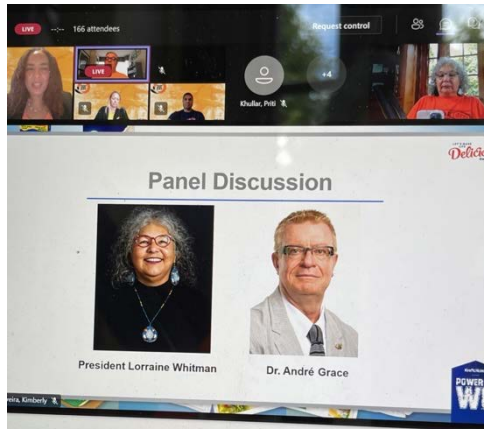
AGA Committee Meeting via Zoom

Discussed the agenda and organization of the annual general assembly (AGA) for October 2021.

Media Video "Get Out and Vote"

Through social media, I reached out to all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women who were deciding whether they would vote in the federal election that took place on September 20,

2021. Through workshops, social media, and in-person advocations, I urged all to vote.



Mi'kmaq Cultural Tourism Teams Meeting

Held a Teams call on cultural tourism and authenticity for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. We reached out to communities, the Friendship Centre, and the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association.

Executive Council Meeting

A meeting occurred before the general meeting to update the Executive Council on the AGA and upcoming information, dates, and updates.

FAFIA Annual General Meeting

Attended a panel discussion with experts to examine the implications of the institutional culture of misogyny, racism, and homophobia for women who are employed and policed by the RCMP.

Resiliency PTMA PEI

I and the CEO met, through Zoom, with the PEI PTMA board of directors on "What can NWAC do for you!" The meeting focused on governance support and seeking services from NWAC (discussion and resources on how to go through the process of building up governance and how we can assist in building up needs in their region).

New Brunswick Gathering of Elders on the Grounds, Fredericton

Attended the sunrise MMIWG ceremony in Fredericton, where there was a feast, dancing, drumming, and songs, as well as the full moon ceremony in the evening. I had the opportunity to visit the new resiliency lodge in Gagetown.

Guest Appearance for "Dress for Success"

I made a guest appearance at a Zoom workshop called Dress for Success, a business development program put on by NWAC to help our Indigenous learn the ins and outs of how and when to dress for business success.

Kraft Heinz Speaking Panel

I took part in a discussion panel on how to support truth and reconciliation from a corporate context, where I spoke about MMIWG2S, residential school survivors, policing, justice and child welfare, and the National Inquiry.

Sephora Town Hall

I spoke to Sephora staff about NWAC's organization, its mission and advocacy work, and the impact of the newly recognized Truth and Reconciliation Day



on September 30 (from a personal lens and education awareness perspective). I provided advice to retailers on how to be agents of change in support of Indigenous voices and communities.

Hootsuite Event Speech for Orange Shirt Day and Truth and Reconciliation

This was a corporate talk and question-and-answer period to speak to Hootsuite and its employees about Orange Shirt Day and Truth and Reconciliation, along with other topics related to NWAC and what we do.

Board of Director's Meeting

Gave an update on what was happening prior to the AGA.

Finance Committee Meeting

Attended a meeting of the financial committee to review finances.

Commemoration Honouring of Orange Shirt Day & National Truth & Reconciliation Day, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, September 30

I had the privilege of spending the day in Wolfville, where the coordinated event put on by Glooscap First Nation, Acadia University, and the Town of Wolfville took place on the new statutory holiday. My opening remarks began at the town's clock tower. During this mawio'mi, a pow wow took place. There was also a ceremony of the sacred fire, smudging, storytelling, singers, and dancers. Elders spoke about the importance of this day. Municipal and government dignitaries joined in commemorating this day. A feast followed closing remarks.

Lifemark Speaking Event

Lifemark held a Zoom talk and open session to talk about NWAC, history, Indigenous issues, and how all can contribute to diversity. A question-and-answer period was held on the importance of National Truth and Reconciliation Day and Orange Shirt Day as a way to connect and educate people.



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-09-23 · ...

So honoured to be in the presence of Jeremy Dutcher @jdutchermusic of Tobique First Nation in New Brunswick! Juno Award musician, 2019, he used his acceptance speech to critique the government's approach to reconciliation with #Indigenous peoples. Our youth are so empowering! 😊



Lorraine Whitman @... · 2021-09-30 · ...

Opening Prayer at @AcadiaU in honour of National Truth & Reconciliation Day. We reflect and learn more about our shared history & we commemorate Orange Shirt Day to create awareness of the inter-generational impacts of residential schools. #EveryChildMatters #orangeshirtday



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Native Women's
Association of Canada



L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada

nwac.ca