


NWAC President's Report

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

LORRAINE WHITMAN

Lorraine Whitman was elected President of the Native Women's Association of Canada on September 14, 2019. Before 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.





My Dear Friends,

This Christmas I took some time to reflect. We were hoping Christmas would be different this year. While there were still restrictions, I was able to meet a few family members—enjoying once again the chance to take part in a non-commercial holiday, eating traditional foods, and spending time with those close to me.

Buying local is so important to keeping the economy going. The few gifts I did buy were purchased locally: Indigenous-made earrings, pictures, a basket....

It has been barely two years since the federal government removed the last remnants of sexual discrimination from the *Indian Act*. Indigenous women are still experiencing poverty, unemployment, and violence at disproportionate rates. And while we have seen more and more women in political leadership positions, including within large and national Indigenous organizations, some former female federal politicians say they were marginalized and even subjected to violence during the time they spent in the public sphere.

This unbalance between the sexes did not originate with Indigenous Peoples. It was European men, accustomed to a hierarchy in which they played a dominate role, who created the current state of inequity.

So let me talk a little bit about what can be done to make things right again.

The first thing we would say to federal politicians is to work to develop a real national action plan—one that addresses the ongoing violence directed at Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. This plan will have real timelines, real measurable outcomes, and real cost estimates.

The most recent statistics indicate that five per cent of Canadian women are Indigenous. And yet, in 2020, Indigenous women accounted for 22 per cent of all homicide victims in this country. The year before, they accounted for 30 per cent.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Women and Girls declared that a genocide is taking place. It issued 231 Calls for Justice. These are the practical steps that must be taken to keep Indigenous women out of the hands of predators. Based on those Calls, we at the Native Women's Association of Canada released our own plan, with timelines and costs. We would be quite happy for you to use our plan as a template.

We make this gesture because too many of us are still dying. From our own survey, we know that the violence increased when the COVID-19 pandemic first hit in the spring of 2020. Some organizations are saying that the violence has now dropped back to pre-COVID levels—which is still not a good thing—but NWAC has no evidence of this.

Let me be clear. The murders and disappearances of Indigenous people are not entirely gender-based. Too many Indigenous men—our brothers, fathers, husbands, and sons—also are victims of violence.

Yet Indigenous women are especially vulnerable. We are vulnerable in part because of the high levels of domestic violence that plague our communities; because of the racism and discrimination directed at us on Canadian streets; and because economic marginalization forces too many of us into insecure housing or dangerous situations as we try to put food on our tables.



The National Inquiry said economic marginalization is one of the pathways into the violence. Federal ministers have the power to help shut that pathway down. You can create economic opportunities for Indigenous women.

At NWAC, we are running online workshops to teach the skills that Indigenous women can use to turn into micro-businesses—things they can do to earn money from their homes, many of which are located in remote communities.

COVID-19 has taught us all how much can be done online. Imagine if our governments would help fund online learning for Indigenous women. Imagine if you helped fund more programs, like those run by NWAC, that will teach Indigenous women business and related skills to give them a leg up.

I think of all of you in this new year. It is my hope in 2022 that we may all work together. It is also my hope that everyone is able to get their vaccines so we can get back to our traditional way of life, marked by the powwows and gatherings that are so important to us. I was able to get my booster vaccine shot in December and I hope you are able to get yours as well.

Wishing everyone the best in love, health, and laughter, and looking forward to a better 2022.


President Lorraine Whitman
@LWhitman_NWAC




My December Agenda

Amazing Book Meeting

I was interviewed by Nimbus Publishing for a profile in an upcoming book entitled *Amazing L'nu of Mi'kma'ki*. On behalf of the publishers and co-author [Julie Pellissier-Lush](#), PEI's first Mi'kmaw Poet Laureate, I was informed that I was among 50 truly amazing L'nu to be honoured in this nonfiction book. Geared to schoolchildren and young adults, the book will celebrate the accomplishments of our region's Mi'kmaq. I am being featured as an L'nu leader under the category "Activists and Heroes."

Indigenous Tourism Final Session

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada believes Indigenous tourism is one of the strongest platforms for Canadians to rally support around Indigenous communities. As we continue to mourn the children lost to residential schools and struggle with reconciliation, Indigenous tourism can play a vital role in educating people about Indigenous culture.

Meeting to Discuss Indigenous Women's Course at Brandon University

I had a conversation with Brandon University regarding an Indigenous Women's Course I will be involved in. The course focuses on my experiences as a Mi'kmaw woman and how we all can change the lives of others through education. The intent is to encourage Indigenous students who are going back to school. Positive support and role modelling can be important influences for students.

Status of Women and Indigenous Leaders Meeting

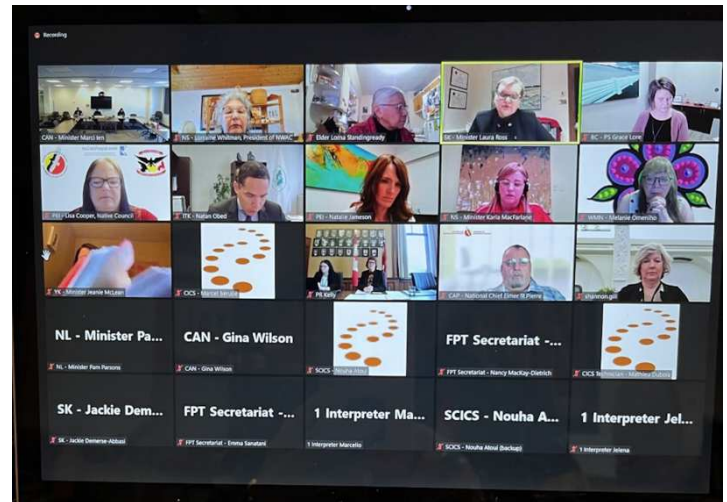
A virtual meeting was held between the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women and national Indigenous leaders and representatives. Participating Indigenous organizations were the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Métis National Council, Women of the Métis Nation/Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Native Women's Association of Canada, and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.

The following topics were addressed:

- Addressing gender-based violence against Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people
- Implementing gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus)
- Using an intersectional lens
- Economic reconciliation

Canada–Mexico Indigenous Crossroads Roundtable Discussion

A virtual discussion table took place between Indigenous women experts from Canada and Mexico. We shared our perspectives on how Indigenous women may participate in the decision-making process. On the occasion of this International Human Rights Day, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada collaborated with the Canadian Embassy in Mexico.



Governor General Meeting via Zoom

Due to the new COVID-19 variant, we were unable to meet in person. However, I was able to take part in a meet-and-greet with Her Excellency the Governor General of Canada Mary Simon, where I gave my congratulations and offered NWAC's support. We talked about how to give more recognition to Indigenous women across the country and discussed a national monument for truth and reconciliation. I invited Her Excellency to visit the Resiliency Lodge and Social and Cultural



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-12-08 ·
Looking fwd to this morn's meeting btw Fed-Prov-Territ Ministers resp for the Status of Women, & Nat'l Indigenous Leaders & Reps to address #genderbasedviolence towards #Indigenous women, girls & #2SLGBTQQIA+ & next steps on the #NationalActionPlan. To move ahead we need action.

Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-12-08
Today, #Dec6 is the 32nd ann the École Polytechnique shoo women were murdered. On th Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence against Women we honour & remember all women who have been killed because of gender-based violence.
polymtl.ca/december6/



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-12-14 ·

A special thank you to Her Excellency @GGCanada Mary Simon. It was an honour to speak and meet her today to discuss tasks at hand regarding #reconciliation & how we can all work together in a meaningful and collaborative manner, #Indigenous and non-Indigenous both!



Innovation Centre once the pandemic is over.



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-12-10 ...

Human Rights Day: There are deep inter-connections between ending human rights violations, providing the right to security, dignity, equality & justice. Let's work together in making the world a better place for us today and our children tomorrow.



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-12-08 ...

After being fully vaccinated, I have received my [#COVID-19](#) booster shot. I feel it is the right thing to do for myself and my family and loved ones in order to keep us safe.

[#BoosterShot](#)



Governor General... · 2021-12-08 ...

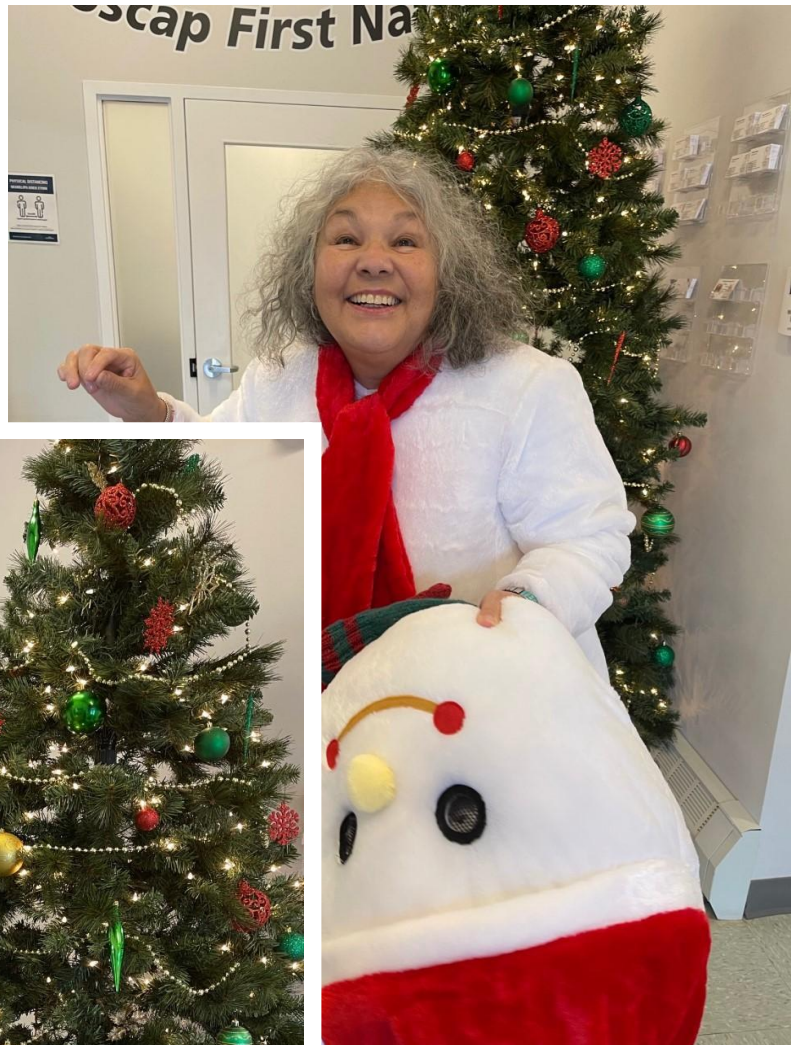
Today is an important milestone in Governor General Mary Simon's first year as [#GG30](#): granting Royal Assent for the first time.

[#GGSimon](#) granted Royal Assent to Bill C-4, banning the practice of conversion therapy in Canada.



NWAC Christmas Staff Event

Staff were acknowledged for all of the work they have done over the past year At our online staff event. We wished everyone all the best for the holidays and in the new year.





Native Women's
Association of Canada



L'Association des
femmes autochtones
du Canada



Lorraine Whitman @L... · 2021-12-02
Yesterday was the last of Elf on the Shelf
day - but my Elf follows me throughout
the month of December. Do you have
your elf on the shelf? 🧝
#elfonashelf
thepioneerwoman.com/holidays-celeb...

