



WE RISE

**Calling to Justice, 1st Annual
Conference for Change**

**Presented by the Saskatchewan
First Nations Women's Commission**

MARCH 24-25-26, 2021



FSIN

This March 24-26, the **Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission** presents the first annual We Rise Conference, dedicated to advancing a regional action plan for change.

In 2007, the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)** moved to enshrine the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.” In 2015, the Truth & Reconciliation Commission released **94 Calls to Action** to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance reconciliation. Four years later, **Reclaiming Power and Place: the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls** called for transformative legal and social changes to resolve the crisis that has devastated Indigenous communities across the country.

Many First Nations people in Saskatchewan have shared their insight and experiences to build a better world for future generations. This three-day conference acknowledges our part in advocating for change, and that of our allies, and reflects on what we've accomplished so far, helping us to move forward to the next steps, together.

A **Red Eagle Lodge** event, all associated proceeds from We Rise will be directed toward front-line programs and services for First Nations women, the keepers of the home fire, and devote resources to strategic goals including the advancement of Women's Rights and Sovereignty.

ONLINE DELIVERY:

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, We Rise will be delivered in an online format through **Webinar Ninja**. While we are disappointed we can't meet in-person, we are excited about a format that will enable many more people to be a part of this conference.

CONFERENCE FORMAT:

This three-day conference includes a mix of live and prerecorded segments. Each morning will feature two prominent keynote speakers. In the afternoon, a limited number of conference attendees will have the opportunity to attend small breakout sessions to dig deeper into the day's main theme with a skilled facilitator, and to build a collective mind map. These findings will be shared with all We Rise registrants at the end of each day in our Sharing Circle, when facilitators will meet with host Erica Beaudin to share what they learned in their groups.

ABOUT RED EAGLE LODGE

Initiated by the **Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission (SFNWC)**, the Saskatchewan First Nation Women's Society Act passed in 2020, the first step in the creation of the Red Eagle Lodge, an Indigenous Women's Institution that will serve Saskatchewan First Nations.

Red Eagle Lodge will operate front-line programs and services for First Nations women, the keepers of the home fire, and devote resources to strategic goals including the advancement of Women's Rights and Sovereignty.

This institution is currently building its foundation by pursuing incorporation, business planning, and finalizing its governance structure, with the guidance and support of the **SFNWC and the Women's Secretariat of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nation (FSIN)**.

Red Eagle Lodge hosts We Rise Conference (March 24-25-26, 2021), the **Strength of our Women Gala** (May 21, 2021), the Commemorative Event & Powwow in Honour of MMIWG, Families & Survivors (Summer 2021), and the **Saskatchewan Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum** (Sept 2021). These events serve to inspire, educate, and forge new relationships that advance change.

ABOUT SFNWC

The SFNWC is made up of all of the elected female Chiefs in Saskatchewan. These leaders act as an important and recognized regional voice for the advancement of First Nations women's and children's rights in Saskatchewan. The SFNWC is committed to the development and sustenance of healthy communities within which all First Nations people thrive.

Message from We Rise Conference Chair, FSIN Vice Chief Heather Bear

As Chair of the SFNWC, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the first annual We Rise Conference, an event that is intended to serve as a vehicle for change so that we confront MMIWG together, as a wider community.

Over the years, the SFNWC has worked to bring resolutions to the Chiefs-in-Assembly dealing with issues including violence against women; women's well-being including pregnancy, birthing and caring for infants; and the need for an HIV strategy. In 2017, the Women's Commission further emphasized the need for widespread awareness about violence against women and girls and brought a Declaration to Honour Indigenous Women and Girls to the Chiefs in Assembly at the FSIN and AFN levels. Most recently, we passed a resolution in support of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice and calls on the Chief's-in-Legislative Assembly to support the Implementation of the National Inquiry 231 Calls for Justice. These issues affect each and every one of us, and we need to work together to move forward with solutions.

Many thanks to our allies for partnering with us to present this incredible group of keynote speakers and performers. And thanks to each and every one of the registrants for bringing their voices to We Rise. Together, we can make change.

Respectfully,



Vice Chief Heather Bear

Office of the Fourth Vice Chief, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN)
Chair of the Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission (SFNWC)



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24th: ACKNOWLEDGING RACISM

9 am	DAY ONE OPENING (Paskwa) Elder Blessings: Senator Jenny Spyglass Opening Drum: All Tribes Drum Group Welcome: Host Erica Beaudin FSIN Greetings: Chief Bobby Cameron AFN Women's Council Greetings: Chief Connie Big Eagle, Ocean Man First Nation SFNWC Greetings: Former Chief Marie-Anne Day Walker-Pelletier, Okanese First Nation Women's Song: Danetta Strongarm and Chante Speidel
10 am	DAY ONE KEYNOTE I: Judge David Arnot
11 am	DAY ONE KEYNOTE II: Dr. Alika Lafontaine <i>Truth Before Reconciliation in Health</i> Performance: Métis Fiddler Jordan Daniels with Dancers Michelle Leniuk & Kala Montgrand
1 pm	DAY ONE Q&A (Tatanka): Host Erica Beaudin with David Arnot and Alika Lafontaine
1:45 pm	WORKSHOPS – Limited to 60 participants
3 pm	SHARING CIRCLE (Storyteller's Circle) – Host Erica Beaudin with workshop facilitators Colleen Christopherson-Cote, Jocelyne Wasacase-Merasty & Russell McAuley and Dr. Rebecca Major

THURSDAY, MARCH 25th: CALLING TO JUSTICE

9 am	DAY TWO OPENING (Paskwa) Elder Blessings: Elder Marj Reynolds Welcome: Host Erica Beaudin FSIN Greetings: Vice Chief Heather Bear SFNWC Greetings: Chief Lynn Acoose, Zagime Anishinabek Nation
9:30 am	DAY TWO KEYNOTE I: Judge Marion Buller <i>Moving Forward: Advancing the Calls for Justice</i> **LIVE Q&A with host Erica Beaudin to follow
11 am	DAY TWO KEYNOTE IIa: Dr. Priscilla Settee & Dr. Manuela Valle-Castro <i>Canadian Colonialism and Human Trafficking: Who is Accountable for the MMIWG2S in the Prairies? Some Background, and a Path Forward</i> Performance: Mitch Daigneault Red Dress Song
11:30 am	DAY TWO KEYNOTE IIb: Alisa Lombard <i>Reproductive Justice & Forced Sterilization</i>
1 pm	DAY TWO Q&A (Tatanka): Host Erica Beaudin with Dr. Priscilla Settee & Dr. Manuela Valle-Castro & Alisa Lombard
1:45 pm	WORKSHOPS – Limited to 60 participants
3 pm	SHARING CIRCLE (Storyteller's Circle) – Host Erica Beaudin with workshop facilitators Colleen Christopherson-Cote, Jocelyne Wasacase-Merasty & Russell McAuley and Dr. Rebecca Major

FRIDAY, MARCH 26th: CALLING TO JUSTICE

9 am	DAY THREE OPENING (Paskwa) Elder Blessings: Elder Mary Lee Welcome: Host Erica Beaudin FSIN Greetings: Vice Chief David Pratt SFNWC Greetings: Chief Joyce Naytowhow-McLeod, Montreal Lake Cree Nation
9:30 am	DAY THREE KEYNOTE I: Dr. Kim McKay-McNabb <i>Sharing Our MMIW/G Stories of Trauma, Healing and Recovery – Families Healing Within</i> **LIVE Q&A with host Erica Beaudin to follow
10:30 am	DAY THREE KEYNOTE II: Dr. Verna St. Denis <i>Let's Explore Racism: Past and Present Practices</i> Performance: Eekwol & T-Rhyme – For Women by Women **LIVE Q&A with host Erica Beaudin to follow
1:30 pm	WORKSHOPS – Limited to 60 participants
3 pm	SHARING CIRCLE (Storyteller's Circle) – Host Erica Beaudin with workshop facilitators Colleen Christopherson-Cote, Jocelyne Wasacase-Merasty & Russell McAuley and Dr. Rebecca Major
4 pm	WE RISE CLOSING Women's Song: Danetta Strongarm and Chante Speidel Closing Remarks: Vice Chief Heather Bear Closing Prayers: Elder Mary Lee Closing Drums: All Tribes Drum

WE RISE CONFERENCE CHAIR

FSIN Vice Chief Heather Bear is a member of Ochapowace First Nation. Before being elected into her current role as fourth Vice Chief of the FSIN in 2014, Bear served as Councillor of Ochapowace First Nation for six years. Bear's terms as Vice Chief have been dedicated to advocating for the betterment and advancement of all First Nations in the areas of Treaty implementation, prioritizing education as a Treaty right, establishing and growing First Nations schools, and ensuring First Nations youth are given the opportunities to become future leaders. She is committed to improving the lives of First Nations people.

WE RISE HOST

Erica Beaudin is a proud Nehiyaw/Métis woman from the Cowessess First Nation in Treaty Four Territory. She has been the Executive Director of the Regina Treaty Status Indian Services agency since 2007. RTSIS is owned by the Touchwood Agency Tribal Council and the File Hills-Qu'Appelle Tribal Council. The organization provides services for Urban First Nations and First Nations transitioning to and from reserve. She was a Strength of our Women award recipient in 2018 for Leadership & Advocacy and contributed to the National Inquiry into MMIWG with national status as a non legal party with standing representative. Erica will be hosting We Rise, facilitating question and answer periods, and our Sharing Circle at the end of each day.

WE RISE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Judge David Arnot was appointed Chief Commissioner for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in 2009, after a decade of service as Treaty Commissioner for the Province of Saskatchewan. He is known for introducing the phrase "we are all treaty people" in 2002, with the guidance of Elders, and has been widely recognized for his efforts to incorporate treaty education into the provincial education system. Judge Arnot's work on the "Teaching Treaties in the Classroom Project" was specifically cited as a model for Canada by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Racism in his report presented in March 2004.

The **Honourable Judge Marion Buller** is Cree and a member of Mistawasis First Nation. In 1994, she was appointed the first woman First Nations judge in British Columbia in 1994. She was appointed as chief commissioner for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2016. Asked about the Final Report, Buller said:

"Many of the truths I heard from families and survivors left me in tears. At the same time, all of the families' and survivors' courage and resilience inspired me and gave me hope for real change in our communities. Since then, I have heard from many individuals and families who, as a result of sharing their truths with us, have made healthy changes in their lives. I am forever grateful to all of them. As we start to write our Final Report, I am reminded of the recommendations made by families and survivors. They are the real experts about what has to change."

Dr. Alika Lafontaine is Cree-Métis-Anishinaabe-Polynesian, born and raised in southern Saskatchewan/Treaty 4 territory. Lafontaine is an award-winning physician, speaker, alignment consultant, and the first Indigenous physician listed by the Medical Post as one of Canada's 50 Most Powerful Doctors. After completing a B.Sc. in chemistry at the University of Regina, he completed his M.D. at the University of Saskatchewan, followed by a five-year fellowship in anesthesiology. In the midst of his fellowship, Lafontaine became CBC's "Canada's Next Great Prime Minister," winning the competition with a platform focused on reconciling the Treaty relationship between Canada's Indigenous Peoples and Canadians. He was recently elected as the Canadian Medical Association's president-elect. Lafontaine will serve as the first Indigenous president of the CMA in 2022-23.

Alisa Lombard, B.S.Sc., LL.L., LL.B, has appeared before various levels of courts, administrative Tribunals and international committees and commissions, including the United Nations Committee Against Torture and the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights. She is currently pursuing a masters in health law, with an emphasis on policy and ethics at the University of Ottawa. Her academic work in this regard focuses on reproductive rights, the law on consent and the adequacy of its protections for Indigenous women and girls. Lombard is lead counsel on a proposed class action pertaining to the forced sterilization of Indigenous women in Saskatchewan. For her advocacy in relation to this matter, she was recognized in "Chatelaine's Women of the Year 2018".

Dr. Kim McKay-McNabb is from George Gordon First Nation. She is Executive Director of the White Raven Healing Centre, File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, and practices as an Indigenous Therapist, Researcher and Clinician. The research she conducts is led by First Nation communities and is community-based with focus on holistic health, guided by teachings from the Knowledge Keepers within Treaty 4 Territories and beyond. In 2015, Dr. Kim McKay-McNabb received the education award at the Strength of our Women Gala.

Dr. Verna St. Denis is a member of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation and grew up as a non-status Indian and Métis in parkland Saskatchewan. She earned her PhD from Stanford University and is Professor in Educational Foundations at the University of Saskatchewan, where she has been a faculty member since 1992. In addition to teaching anti-oppressive education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, she supervises graduate students research in anti-racist education, and provides professional in-service for schools and other educational organizations. She serves as special advisor to the President on anti-racism and anti-oppression and is leading the development and implementation of the university's anti-racism/anti-oppression policy and strategy.

Dr. Priscilla Settee is a member of Cumberland House Swampy Cree First Nations and a Professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, where she teaches courses on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Indigenous Social Economies. Dr. Settee is the author of several books *Pimatisiwin*, *Global Indigenous Knowledge Systems* (2013) that looks at global Indigenous Knowledge Systems and *The Strength of Women*, *Ahkameyimohk* (2011) that examines the role of Indigenous women's stories in establishing truth, reconciliation and social change. Dr. Settee's new co-edited book, *Indigenous Food Systems Concepts, Cases and Conversation*, was released in January 2020. Settee serves on the Seed Change Canada and Cultural Conservancy (U.S.) boards and was a David Suzuki Fellow for 2019-20 where she researched the impact of climate change on Indigenous trapping, hunting and land-based livelihoods. Dr. Settee is the principle investigator for a research project on trafficked women and children. She has recently been appointed as a research fellow for NDN Collective for 2020-2022.

Dr. Manuela Valle-Castro is originally from Chile and has Mestiza (Spanish-Italian and Afro-Indigenous) background. She holds a Ph.D. in Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice and a master's degree in Women's and Gender Studies, both from the University of British Columbia. Dr. Valle-Castro is an experienced educator who is deeply committed to social, gender, and racial justice and equity. She has extensive experience developing and delivering anti-racist and anti-oppressive curriculum to a diversity of audiences. For the past three years, Dr. Valle-Castro coordinated the Anti-Racism Network. Under this capacity, she led coalition building and advocacy work with a range of actors including Indigenous and settler organizations, as well as agencies and organizations that work with newcomers, immigrants, and refugees.

WE RISE WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

Colleen Christopherson-Cote has been working in community economic development for over 15 years in both urban and rural communities across Saskatchewan. She has extensive knowledge on the complexity of human service systems and the intricacies of how policy and practice indirectly and directly impact community, particularly those who are most vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed. She specializes in building intersectoral collaboratives and as the coordinator for Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, the Director of Evaluation and Analysis with the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership, Colleen weaves webs of relationships that not only break through the confines of system silos but also disrupt the hierarchies within them that so often prevent timely, holistic action on critical issues.

Dr. Rebecca Major is Mi'kmaw and Métis. Dr. Major recently earned her Ph.D. in Indigenous Public Policy at the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan, where she investigated Indigenous land claims and identity rights. She is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Windsor. Major holds an MA in Native Studies and a BA in History and Native Studies, also from the University of Saskatchewan.

Russell McAuley (He/She) is a Two Spirit Nêhiyaw-Métis from Cumberland House [Swampy] Cree Nation, Treaty 5 territory. He/She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology which led him/her to frontline work in mental health & addiction services as well as a Bachelor of Education from the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) which led him/her to teaching high school. Russell is currently a Master of Education candidate in educational foundations at the University of Saskatchewan where he/she focuses on anti-racist education as well as the Intercultural Education Coordinator for Saskatchewan Intercultural Association (SIA). Along with sitting on various committees, involved with several community initiatives, Russell is also a facilitator with the Anti-Racist Network where he/she connects people from all walks of life to anti-racist, anti-oppressive and Indigenous education. Revitalizing and retaining Indigenous worldviews through decolonization, Indigenization, and reconciliation are enormous passions that provide healing for this storyteller.

Jocelyne Wasacase-Merasty is Cree from Kahkewistahaw First Nation with a diverse background in governance and community engagement. She is a certified ICA facilitator, and is currently a PhD Candidate at the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan, where her research focuses on community decision-making. Jocelyne is also Interim Executive Director of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nation (FSIN) Women’s Secretariat.

WE RISE PERFORMERS

All Tribes Drum Group

Métis Fiddler Jordan Daniels with Dancers Michelle Leniuk & Kala Montgrand

Dancing has always been a part of life for cousins Kala Montgrand and Michelle Leniuk, who have been dancing to Métis music since they were kids. Kala is a member of the Creeland Dancers, who specialize in a fusion of Métis jigging and square dancing focused on First Nations and Métis cultural enrichment and reconciliation. Jordan Daniels has been playing Métis fiddle music since he was ten years old. He’s a five- time Saskatchewan junior champion at the John Arcand fiddle fest and has performed with the Regina Symphony Orchestra and across Western Canada in many events. They will be performing a first change into the Red River Jig into Big John McNeil. They feel privileged to perform in honour of MMIWG.

Mitch Daigneault – Red Dress

Mitch Daigneault is from Fishing Lake First Nation. An award-winning country singer, he has released two albums to date, and spent many years performing with the legendary C Weed Band. “Red Dress” took flight after Ashley Morin went missing in July, 2018. He wanted to write a song to raise awareness about MMIWG. “With awareness comes hurt,” Daigneault says. “I hope this song can provide a little bit of comfort.”

Eekwol & T-Rhyme – For Women by Women

Eekwol and T-Rhyme are seasoned rappers from nehiyaw and Dene territories, currently living in Saskatoon. “The For Women By Women Project (FWBW) was born out of an awakening and realization that in our music, we need to create the dialogue and steer the narratives to be our own truths. As nehiyaw iskwewuk (Indigenous women), we are living the results of the damage that colonization placed on our families. Guided by the intentions of creating a good life and a protected path for our daughters, we are changing the story, one rhyme at a time. With beats by Justin Knight, Shane Keepness and Doc Blaze, FWBW is the beginning of a movement. We’re here to lift consciousness, reflect our matriarchal ancestors, and recognize our power.”

Eekwol and T-Rhyme will be playing with DJ **Joslin Sanger**.

Danetta Strongarm and Chante Speidel – Women’s Song

Danetta Strongarm is from Kawacatoose First Nation and has been singing since she could talk. Culture has always been an important part of her life. She has been singing and participating in ceremony with Chante Speidel since they were kids. Danetta’s father, Sanford Strongarm, will be playing the drums for their performance.

WE RISE ALLIES



Contact

indigenouswomen@fsin.com