

A CELEBRATION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE AT SENECA

*Looking Forward Through
The Past 50 Years*

*Niigaa Ninaabying Kenmaag
Gaabishizhewbaak Ehko
Naanmidnazaa Boongaadong*



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senecacollege.ca/create

Seneca@York Campus

70 The Pond Road

Toronto, ON M3J 3M6

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CONTENTS

4	INTRODUCTION
10	CHAPTER 1: INDIGENOUS STAFF AND STUDENTS
20	CHAPTER 2: INDIGENOUS ALUMNI
32	CHAPTER 3: INDIGENOUS FASHION
42	CHAPTER 4: TRADITIONAL DANCE
52	CHAPTER 5: INDIGENOUS ARTWORK
72	CHAPTER 6: THE LAND
86	CHAPTER 7: THE FUTURE
90	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

On October 15, 2015 a traditional welcoming ceremony was held at the Newnham campus to celebrate the installation of a traditional Indigenous tipi. In attendance was Hon. David Zimmer, Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, who joined Seneca President David Agnew in signing the provincial Protocol Agreement.



Hand Drum (Anishinaabe), 2005, pictured throughout Rawhide over a wooden rim, with seven grandfather teachings painted in acrylic

FOREWORD

BY LAUREL SCHOLLEN



Laurel Schollen
Academic Vice-President

2017-18 MARKS THE 50th anniversary of Seneca and the Ontario college system. During the year, we will celebrate Seneca, our students, graduates and employees and reflect on our journey in a variety of ways. “A Celebration of Indigenous Culture at Seneca,” the result of a student project born out of passion and commitment, supported and guided by staff, is one such example. This work tells the story of Seneca’s relationship to Indigenous people from its inception to the present.

It also points to the future and the commitments Seneca made in 2015 as a signatory to the Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes, and the imperative to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. The signing of the protocol was a step forward in Seneca’s history. By signing this aspirational document, we committed to growing the Indigenous curriculum and educational supports for students.

Between these sections are chapters on Indigenous art, dance, fashion and the connection to the land, which provide just a snapshot of the richness of Indigenous culture we have the privilege to witness at Seneca. But most important are the personal and powerful stories of Indigenous staff, students and alumni who speak about their journey as learners, teachers and guides, and the role Seneca and its First Peoples Office has played in their lives.

Although the First Peoples office is a service, it really is a family for many of the students who come from communities at great distances from the college. It has also been a place for students to learn and discover their Indigenous culture. Further, it has served the Seneca community by providing outreach and education activities such as class visits and cultural workshops, including events such as the keynote address given by Dr. Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, referenced in Chapter 7: The Future.

As we look forward to the next 50 years, we do so acknowledging our responsibilities as treaty people. At Seneca this means we must work toward integrating Reconciliation practices with Indigenous people throughout the institution; we must strive to meet the commitments we have made.

In closing, I would like to thank our student authors, Aboriginal Education Council, First Peoples@Seneca, and our staff for their dedication to producing this book. It grounds where we are in our 50th year and clearly points to the future we must create together.

Tipi, 2015
Assiniboine Tipis,
Lundar, Manitoba
Wood and canvas



HISTORY OF SENECA

BY MARK SOLOMON AND PEGGY PITAWANAKWAT AS TOLD TO SHANNON BLAKE AND ERIN DOLMAGE



Seneca Headdress
(Gustoweh), 2014
Lyle Anderson (Cayuga)
Turkey feathers, leather
and wood

SENECA IS NAMED after the Seneca First Nation, though the institution is not located on Seneca territory. When giving an oral history of Seneca's name in 2012, the institution's first president, Dr. William Newnham, explained that the original Board of Governors were meeting in Brantford—traditional Seneca territory—at the time they were considering a name for the College. Seneca was not yet built and, indeed, no Ontario land had yet been purchased for the College. Algonquin College and Mohawk College were founded at a similar time and Seneca College followed their example by also naming itself after a local First Nation. Dr. Newnham reported that the Board of Governors made this choice with the best of intentions, and with respect.

As Seneca grew, its Newnham Campus, Markham Campus and Seneca@York Campus were all built on traditional territory, not of the Seneca First Nation, but of the Wendat Confederacy, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Land from Etobicoke River in the west, Ashbridges Bay in the east, and stretching 45 kilometers to the north of Lake Ontario, was sold to the British Crown in 1787 in what was known as The Toronto Purchase. A second round of negotiations in 1805 followed this purchase. The boundaries of the treaty were contested, and finally in 2010 the Government of Canada paid the Mississaugas of the New Credit \$145-million to compensate for this unjust deal.

Seneca's King Campus and Peterborough Campus were built on lands that are covered by the Williams Treaty of 1923, a treaty between the Crown and the Chippewas of Lake Simcoe, Lake Huron and the Mississaugas of Rice Lake, Scugog, Curve Lake and Alderville. Unlike earlier treaties, this one did not secure Indigenous rights to resource development (hunting, fishing, etc.).

There was much conflict between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people in early Indigenous confederacies. However, as conflicts between French and British colonizers escalated, the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people created a peace treaty with one another called the Dish with One Spoon. This is an important teaching.

An enormous bowl was filled with food. An Elder at the council fire explained that each person should take what they needed, leave enough for the next person, and keep the dish clean. This was not a recipe for simply getting along, but a way to be stewards of one another, now and into the future. It is something we can learn from today.

At the beginning Seneca attempted to honour its namesake First Nation by investing in imitation headdresses. But the headdresses were inauthentic, modeled on headdresses of the Sioux, another Indigenous people mostly located in the American Midwest. When Mark Solomon founded the First Peoples program at Seneca in 2006, he attempted to recommission the headdresses. This attempt was ineffectual,

and ultimately Solomon buried the headdresses, ending one relationship that Seneca has had with Indigenous people. The time of appropriation and pan-Indigeneity was over; now it was time to learn from past mistakes and better understand the identity of Indigenous peoples.

In 2011, Peggy Pitawanakwat and Karen White joined Seneca to head the First Peoples@Seneca office. They have created a space for nurturing and celebrating Indigenous culture that is unequalled in other post-secondary institutions in Ontario. Their role is student-focused, and Pitawanakwat and White serve the College by bringing cultural knowledge to the institution. These women have helped raise the profile and outreach of the First Peoples@Seneca office. It is a designated resource for Indigenous students and staff, strongly integrated into the rest of Seneca activities. Pitawanakwat and White continue to look for ways to increase understanding of Indigenous identity throughout the College, and to integrate Indigenous practices and acts of Reconciliation naturally into the fabric of Seneca.

Pitawanakwat and White have noticed that students are sometimes only studying at the College for one or two years, but Indigenous practices, ceremonies and protocols can have a deep impact on their school—and life—experience. Pitawanakwat and White, with Elder Blu, have overseen building a tipi and the creation of medicine gardens, one specifically for growing sage that is used in smudging throughout the year, and one that grows vegetables that are contributed to the Student Food Bank. There are welcoming ceremonies at the beginning of the school year, New Moon ceremonies each month, and Tasehwung, a feast honouring loved ones who have died.

Pitawanakwat returns to her home territory to collect medicines like birchbark, cedar and sweetgrass that can be used by students during the academic year and together with White and Elder Blu she organizes stories, songs, teachings and

dances throughout the school year. The First Peoples@Seneca office has also ensured that several Seneca students sit on the Aboriginal Education Council (soon to be renamed the Indigenous Education Council).

In the First Peoples@Seneca office there is a buffalo skull where students can lay names and burn medicines to honour their loved ones, and offer prayers. There is an honour drum that the Creator gave women to give to men, to remind them that women are the heartbeat of the community. There are other drums that honour the Seven Grandfather Teachings: wisdom, honesty, bravery, love, respect, truth, and humility. Sometimes the office has cedar tea brewing. Pitawanakwat and White want to create space within Seneca for Indigenous students to see themselves; Pitawanakwat and White hope to soon have a Gustoweh and Mississauga headdress at every campus.

Besides creating spaces of integration and fostering cultural celebrations at Seneca, Pitawanakwat and White have also worked hard to build relationships with Indigenous organizations across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). An annual giving-back project is part of the rhythm of the First Peoples@Seneca office. It is important not only for the First Peoples office to know what services are available and where they are offered, but also to have a personal relationship with staff who work in these organizations. Pitawanakwat finds this personal relationship can help students overcome bureaucratic barriers. Organizations like Mizibiik and the Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto offer supports such as traditional healers and health care workers, food, clothing, transit assistance and academic bursaries for students.

These outreach initiatives help the Indigenous GTA community to understand that Seneca is not merely a post-secondary institution with a focus on applied learning, but a resource for Indigenous students and staff, a place of opportunity with meaningful connections.

CHAPTER 1
INDIGENOUS STAFF AND STUDENTS

Glaciated boulders, such as those along the shoreline of Georgian Bay, are also known as 'grandfather rocks' and are used in traditional ceremonies such as the sweat lodge.



PEGGY PITAWANAKWAT

BY BETTY KIM



Peggy Pitawanakwat

I WALK IN to the office of the First Peoples@Seneca at the Newnham campus and am warmly greeted by Peggy Pitawanakwat, who sits relaxed with other staff members. Pitawanakwat is Cultural Coordinator with the First Peoples@Seneca. I am 15 minutes early for our interview, so she kindly offers me a cup of cedar tea and a slice of bundt cake before we start. As I sip my tea and nibble at my cake, I notice the decor on the wall—hand drawn pictures, Indigenous artwork and the seven grandfather drums displayed on the back wall farthest from me. Shortly, Pitawanakwat leads me into her office.

Pitawanakwat explains she is a member of the Thunderbird Clan, Anishinabek Nations Confederacy. Her community is the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve (Wiky) on Manitoulin Island. Her mother is from the Ojibway Nation and her father is from the Odawa and Pottawatomi Nations. She is responsible for meeting the cultural needs of Indigenous students at Seneca. Through her role she is also committed to creating an understanding and cultural awareness across the college.

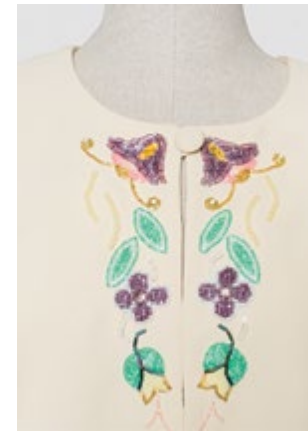
Pitawanakwat started working at Seneca in 2011. There was an available position for Cultural Coordinator with the First Peoples and she decided to apply. It was meant to be a temporary six-month stay. She agreed to join just to get things started, or as she says, “go in and go out.” Now, after six years, Pitawanakwat has helped the First Peoples@Seneca build a growing community of staff, students and alumni. She speaks with great warmth and pride for the people she works with and the work that she does. Listening to her, I can

sense how deeply she’s connected to her heritage, and I am drawn to how in tune she is with herself. She tells me she has always been comfortable with her cultural identity, even from an early age.

Pitawanakwat was born in her community of Wiky, and was delivered by her grandmother, a midwife. “There’s a belief that we have [in our community] that we choose our parents; our spirit chooses parents,” she says. “Being there with my parents before birth and after birth, living there and connecting to the land, grounded me and rooted me [to my heritage] from the outset.”

But at the age of two, Pitawanakwat, her brother and sister, were abruptly taken away from her family and placed into a non-Indigenous home. She explains that this was a common occurrence amongst Indigenous families during the time. It was known as the ‘Sixties Scoop.’ From the 1960s through the late 1980s, Canada implemented a policy that forcefully removed or ‘scooped up’ Indigenous children from their families and communities. They were then placed in foster homes, or given up for adoption.

In Ontario, as many as 16,000 Indigenous children were said to have to been removed during this period. Between the age of two and four, Pitwanakwat was raised by the Anglo-Saxon, non-Indigenous Winters family. With the Winters, she was never shy to talk about who she was or where she came from. She would often ask for things back home and the



Alana Trudeau (Anishinaabe)
Floral Jacket (Manitoulin Island), 2008. Beadwork

Winters were open to exploring different ways to accommodate them. When Pitwanakwat was longing for the taste of traditional bannock bread, the Winters found the closest thing they could find—Yorkshire pudding. “They were good people,” she says warmly. Pitwanakwat and the Winters family eventually found each other again later in her adulthood. Since then, they have continued to be in close contact.

It took Pitwanakwat’s parents and grandparents a long time to get her and her siblings back. Her case was actually one of the only ones in Canada to successfully reunite all of the separated children to their grandparents.

I ask her what it felt like to return home. As if it happened yesterday, Pitawanakwat recalls the moment. Looking around her office, she starts to remember. “The dust from the car, the log house that looked like a castle, my aunt looking out the window, my grandparents, dogs running around with no leash, the apple tree, a huge maple tree with a swing that my grandfather made for us, sun on my face, the smell of the house, my grandmother cooking, I remember feeling total freedom. It was sad to leave [the Winters], but I was home. “We all come from a place that’s common and we evolve, but [it’s important] to never forget that we’re rooted, or where our roots come from,” she explains. “That’s where we get our sense of purpose, and understanding what our identity truly reflects. When we understand, our identity gives us the confidence to do things in life that we need to pursue.”

Ever since Pitawanakwat was a child, her grandmother taught her about the importance of her spirit and her roots. “She told me that we each have a fire,” Pitwanakwat says as she

touches her heart, “and we need to ensure that we take care of that fire; it must never go out. If we can’t take care of ourselves, then we can’t take care of our children, partners, family—or nation or confederacy.”

She has now passed this teaching on to her children and grandchildren, and has been working to help her Indigenous students at Seneca find their own fire. The students who come through her doors are often looking for cultural activities, engagement, and opportunities to learn about themselves. “When they do learn more about their cultural heritage, confidence goes up and their identity shines,” she says.

She loves seeing that transformation.

I ask her what she hopes for herself in the future.

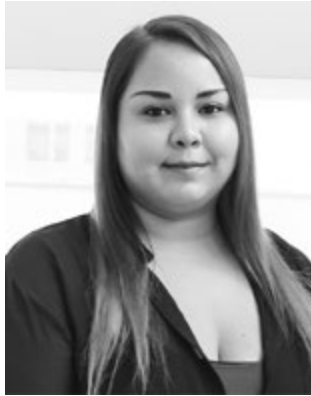
“To carry those teachings to my heart, to keep my spirit alive burning bright, to keep the sense of identity and traditional practices carried on by generations to come,” she says, “I want to let my ancestors know that they did not fight and die for nothing, their teachings were passed on, they are alive through them.”

And it seems she is starting to leave her legacy. “She won at the Pow Wow,” she says, proudly pointing to her granddaughter’s picture on the wall behind her. “It was the first time any one as young as her did it.” Her granddaughter now has the responsibility of leading all the dancers.

Laughing, she says, “I was overwhelmed.”

COURTNEY WEMIGWANS

BY AABIDA DHANJI



Courtney Wemigwans

A SENECA STUDENT in the Business Administration Management program, Courtney Wemigwans has hopes to better the lives of kids who live on First Nations reserves.

Courtney lived in the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island till the age of 19. Now 23, she is completing a three-year program at Seneca, at the Newnham campus.

Although she has moved away from the reserve, she still keeps her culture alive. “Being off reserve, I feel like I have had more of a connection to my Indigenous roots than when I was on the reserve. On the reserve, I was raised by my parents who were both fluent in speaking the Ojibway language. So now I try to speak the language as much as I can, even though I only understand a few words and phrases,” she said.

Courtney is Vice President of the Student Indigenous Council at Seneca. She previously served as President and as student ambassador of the Council. The Council has given her a chance to become more social and become a good public speaker. The reason for this is because she has been able to help with getting the culture known, and answer questions that other staff and students have. “The Indigenous council at Seneca is a great way to integrate First Nations culture and teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous students about that culture, and bring the culture to light,” said Courtney.

She has had the opportunity to meet new people and share how she feels, where she came from, and what she has to offer to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals. “Coming to Seneca back in 2012, I would have never thought I would have the opportunity to carry my skills to leadership positions. But in

my first year, I was presented with the opportunity to join the Student Indigenous Council at Seneca, as President, and I was so excited to be able to take part in the Council because I was looking forward to becoming a part of a family that seemed very passionate about sharing our culture through teachings, workshops, crafts, and social events,” said Courtney. “Since I have joined the Council, I have witnessed more than just passion; but also love, inspiration, and Reconciliation. Through the teachings, workshops, crafts and social events, I have done so much more than just learn more about First Nations culture. I am able to take what I learn back to my community.”

She has seen changes already starting to happen on the Campus itself. A tipi was recently put up outside one of the Newnham campus buildings, just outside the Indigenous student office. “People are becoming aware of the culture, and embracing it,” said Courtney. “The way of life for Indigenous people is primarily through relations, as well as our spiritual connection with the land and animals. Those in other cultures have their own way of life, yes, but I feel as though Indigenous people are more interested in sharing their culture and to not be ashamed about our way of life,” she said. “I feel that Indigenous people are continuing the fight to educate non-Indigenous people about our ways of life. We have been hiding in the shadows for years. Now we are being recognized.”

She feels this is like the start of an era, and it is a good thing for Indigenous peoples, not only at Seneca but beyond as well. “Coming into the Council, there was not as much participation as there is now. Now, we barely have room in our First Peoples office for all of our students. I wouldn’t say that students are ‘adapting’ to our culture but they are definitely learning a lot,” she said. “We like to make the office a place where our First Nations students can work and collaborate in a friendly environment. As more and more students participate in the events hosted by First Peoples@Seneca, it is our opportunity to share with them our knowledge; whether it be through moccasin making, beading, quill work or traditional drum sessions.”

Growing up, Courtney personally experienced how things were on the reserve, and now she can see the difference between life there and here, in the city. The reserve is very different from city life, she said, where to get anywhere it takes at least 20 minutes and houses are two miles away from each other. “The reservation is a close-knit community, everyone knows each other and you get a sense of community,” said Courtney. Although friends and family live far from each other, individuals on reserve are close with one another, whereas here in the city, some of us don’t even know or talk to our neighbours. A day on the reserve, for her, was pretty much going to school, visiting other community members, friends and neighbours, and sometimes attending a workshop. There are various ceremonies and events and prayers that are held on a regular basis, but not everyone attends them.

When Courtney moved to the city, she had to adjust to city life, handling her own finances for school, accommodation, meals and transportation. “Of course your family back home supports you, the community helps you to move forward, but the challenges are still there.”

“The youth in the reserve are stuck in persona, the reservation is their life,” she said. “You lose yourself in everything when growing up on the reservation.” A lot of the youth on the reserve are not very confident about their future. On the reserve, there are not as many opportunities for youth to grow and to get to know the world as off-reserve. “Becoming a part of the Student Indigenous Council has opened my heart to life-long learning about the ways of our First Nations people.”

Courtney mentioned there is a lack of employment on the reserve. In the summer time there are sometimes jobs available; these vary from jobs at stores, the community centre, and office jobs. One summer, she worked at the youth centre on the reserve. “Working at the youth centre was rewarding. I learned that a lot of kids go there, but they do not take advantage of the help that the youth centre offers,” she said. The youth are stuck mentally and physically, she said. “They are stuck on the reserve and have not been able to experience the world outside.” She said she was one of the ‘stuck’ youth, but her community pushed her forward, which led her to where she is now.

“Being away from home feels like I left the community behind. But I didn’t. I left for a bigger purpose. I’m not sure what that purpose is yet, but I will find it one day,” said Courtney.

She plans one day to either run an existing business or start a business of her own, whether it is in the city or on the reserve. By doing this, she is hoping to provide those in her community with employment opportunities, since they are scarce on the reserve. She wants to be able to help them and give them the opportunity to be employed and learn more about business and life outside of the reserve. This will teach them that there is a lot more to life, and show them they are capable of doing a lot more, she said.

Courtney is working towards her goal every day, with all the work she does with the Seneca Indigenous Student Council as well as her educational requirements.

“The council was always there; it was for the students but wasn’t being run by the students. I just helped push that to happen,” said Courtney. Her leadership and speaking skills helped to build up the Council and bring it to where it is today.

“Together we can make a change with everyone, not just Indigenous people,” said Courtney. “We have a strong voice and we hope others will listen and hear us out for who we are. Hopefully we can make progress, build relations and move forward.”

ERIN DOLMAGE

BY ASHLEY KOTAR



Erin Dolmage

WHILE IT MAY seem a cliché, the phrase ‘knowledge is power’ has never been more true than in Professor Erin Dolmage’s classroom at Seneca. I interviewed Erin on a November afternoon. At first, she spoke matter-of-factly about her educational background, but as she began to speak about her students, she glowed. The classroom is a powerful and influential space, and Erin Dolmage’s classroom is a calming place of understanding, truth and empathy.

Erin is a professor of English and Liberal Studies and Indigenous Studies at Seneca. Having completed a Master’s in Indigenous Studies at the University of British Columbia, and currently working on her doctorate at York University, she brings her knowledge to the classroom to empower and enlighten students. Her graduate work with Elders, storytelling and diaries in British Columbia, a politically active Indigenous environment, gave her the depth and understanding required to appreciate Indigeneity.

During her graduate work, Erin worked closely with the Métis community. Initially, she worked to create a micro-history through 40 years of a Métis Elder’s diaries, and worked with a team on a larger project in which she created a historical document internet database for the Métis community in British Columbia.

While she works on her PhD research at York, Erin has been looking at the life and work of Charles Denney, an accountant-turned-genealogist, to examine how he pieced together Métis family histories and created genealogies for

individuals, which is now used in part to confirm Métis citizenship. Erin not only has a great understanding of Indigeneity, but she is able to transmit her knowledge to her students and to share the power of knowledge.

She begins by explaining the structure of her course, which begins with creation, then moves onto contact, the fur trade, and then Indigenous insurrections, including the Métis resistances, the work of Pontiac, Tecumseh and the battles at Little Big Horn (Greasy Grass) and the massacre at Wounded Knee. Finally, explanations of Residential Schools get to the heart of the tough material.

There are two key components to her classes. One is that the students read Indigenous literature as they work through the history, and the other is that she incorporates Reconciliation throughout the duration of the course.

The first key component to her class is that literature is paired with history throughout. Fiction and non-fiction Indigenous writers such as Thomas King, Drew Hayden Taylor and Lee Maracle are introduced to students. Erin stresses the importance of Indigenous voices, while teaching Canada’s Indigenous history. Both the fiction and autobiographical content allows students to understand and truly hear the history directly from those

Indigenous voices. In many cases, such as Brian Maracle’s creation story, Haudenosaunee words are used without translation simply because they cannot be translated accurately. In learning Indigenous history it is important to hear it from their voices, and literature allows this as it opens the door to empathy and understanding.

Erin’s course starts and ends with Reconciliation, which is of the utmost importance to her. She explains that it is imperative that students learn Indigenous history before they are able to understand Reconciliation. While the course flows chronologically, Reconciliation remains an underlying theme throughout. The students are challenged to think about how Reconciliation functions and how to interact with the concept outside of the classroom. She stresses that Reconciliation is not something you have or give, and rather it should be treated as a verb, as it is something you do, and it is the responsibility of everyone.

When she re-introduces Reconciliation in the second half of her course it is alongside Truth and Reconciliation. There she deals with movements such as Red Power and Idle No One, explores contemporary art and artists, and discusses representation and cultural appropriation. Her course is profound and academic; however, she explains that beyond lecturing in the classroom, she gives her students the right tools to start exploring Reconciliation as an action in their everyday lives.

Erin reaches for a stack of papers submitted by her students. They are Reconciliation plans. At the beginning of the course, she asked each student to reflect on what Reconciliation meant to them. They were encouraged to put their thoughts on paper. There is something incredibly powerful about putting words onto paper for others to see, read and digest. Erin makes it clear that if Reconciliation is to be successful, it is essential to teach Indigeneity in school, because it is not possible to make amends if Canadians don’t understand their own history.

Erin tackles important topics; however, the topics stir up emotion and provoke powerful class discussions. It is when themes of adversity and prejudice arise that students of all

cultures find commonalities and she begins fostering bridges between seemingly different cultures. She explains that most of her students are not Indigenous and are eager to learn more. Many of her students are International students, and commonly students from other colonized countries recognize what Erin teaches of Indigenous history reflected in their own histories, allowing the students to connect in an unexpected and moving way. For example, she explains that South African exchange students recognize the ‘pass system’ within their own culture. The pass system was a structure in which Indigenous peoples were not allowed to leave their reserves without a pass from the Indian Agent. They carried a document that essentially segregated them from movement outside of their reserves, and South African students recognize the pass system in their own experience with the system of Apartheid. Students enter the classroom believing they will be learning about something entirely new and foreign to them; however, they often leave the classroom understanding and recognizing a connection with that culture.

Erin gets to the heart of the tough stuff, but this is where knowledge becomes power. These students who have felt outside of a culture, or the students who have felt unclear of their own culture, now have empathy and truth. Erin’s students leave her classroom with the confidence to navigate their world with a deepened perspective. Whether the student returns home to Toronto or Nairobi, they will have built relationships with each other and their knowledge and friendships empower them to appreciate the world differently and to reconcile.

Erin’s words make it clear and concise: “My goal as an educator is to introduce the first steps of Reconciliation to my students, the other steps are up to them and they have to bring that to their wider lives.”

THOMAS BURGOS

BY ALISON CHIU



Thomas Burgos

CANADA IS KNOWN for being an extremely diverse country and is referred to as a ‘cultural mosaic.’ While many Canadians represent different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, most proudly and simply consider themselves Canadian. When asked about his background, 23-year-old Seneca graduate, Thomas Burgos, from Bradford, Ontario identifies himself as being ‘half Native, half Chilean’ descent (his mother is Indigenous and his father Chilean). But growing up, Burgos knew very little about his Native or Hispanic roots and did not relate to one side more than the other. “I just identify as Canadian,” says Burgos, who had little to no exposure to his Indigenous background as a child. He explains that he had only visited a reserve once when he was very young, and he hardly remembers it. “There was a little Pow Wow, and an event going on there, but that was the only time I had ever done that,” he recalls.

Burgos has only recently learned more about his Indigenous culture and as a child he didn’t feel he had support from his family to learn about his unique background. He claims his family had no interest in teaching him about his culture because they had to prioritize their financial issues. Burgos said his family was troubled. “So, the first thing in mind was not to teach me about their cultural heritage, it was more about making enough money to get through the week,” he says. Since he grew up in a small town, Burgos felt isolated and struggled during his transition to the city. In his hometown of Bradford, he attended a small elementary school with an average of 12

students in each classroom. “I actually grew up on a farm for the first 19 years of my life. It’s just outside of the city though, so I was in the city quite a bit,” he recalls. However, it was only after he switched to a larger school in grade seven that he felt less isolated and as if he were “growing up like any other normal kid.” As he grew older, he remained eager to stay in the city. After considering all his options for school, he decided to take the International Business Program at Seneca.

“I wanted to be in Toronto, I knew that. And, basically my options were George Brown, Centennial, Humber, or Seneca, which had one of the better business programs. My dad also went here, so he was really trying to convince me.”

Burgos’s father, Hernan, attended the Aeronautical Engineering program at Seneca, and he also took an I.T. program afterwards. In addition, Burgos’s uncle, who is fascinatingly the father of the famous Eh Bee family, is also a Seneca alumnus. Following in his father and uncle’s footsteps with his choice of a school eventually led Burgos to connect and become actively involved with the Indigenous community.

Initially, like many college students, Burgos was unsure which career path to follow.

“I had no idea what I wanted to do,” he says. One day, his father decided to bring him into the First Peoples@Seneca office in hopes to

help him find a ‘real job.’ First Peoples@Seneca was established with the goal of creating a familiar, homelike atmosphere for Indigenous students with transitional issues. The community of students who spend time at First Peoples@Seneca are encouraged to learn about their Indigenous culture and are provided a strong sense of cultural pride and identity. “I spend my time there because everyone’s so close and supports each other so much,” he says.

He eventually became a student ambassador for First Peoples@Seneca. He felt like he had a place to study where he could be around people he was comfortable with. He said that after meeting everyone, it “just clicked” and that it was like a family at the office. While Burgos was completing his three-year program at Seneca, he was also working on making music since he had earned certification in audio engineering from the Metalworks Institute, a private career college in Mississauga, Ontario. He made an income from producing music under the stage name Burgundy and now he owns a small record label called Major League Recording, which focuses on techno and house music. Currently, he’s working on a duo side project with his roommate. They’re known as Moon Habits, and the duo is hoping to complete their first EP in 2017. After finding his new sense of identity, Burgos continues to be more involved with the Indigenous community, seeking ways to give back to his people. In addition to creating work for himself, he is also working on creating the same opportunities for other members of the community. He has started a non-profit organization that will serve as a business incubator for Indigenous entrepreneurs called Urban First Nations. “Basically, we want to have a building in downtown Toronto that is zoned as a Native community or reserve,” he explains. “That way, we can get the tax benefits that come along with starting a company on the reserve. Right now, if you’re Aboriginal and you want to start a company and get these incentives, you have to start your company on the reserve. But there are no reserves in the area and it’s pointless to start a company way up north on a reserve. It’s going to fail.”

An urban reserve would offer residents economic opportunities that are generally unavailable in remote areas, such as infrastructure, access to labour, and a readily available market to deliver goods and services to. There are currently more than 120 urban reserves across Canada and they serve as stepping-stones into the mainstream economy. They provide better access to capital markets and transportation routes. In addition, they can also reduce operating costs for young Indigenous entrepreneurs. With Urban First Nations, Thomas intends to operate as an incubator where he would personally “provide the Aboriginals with business support and help them get off the ground.”

This type of support has proven invaluable for other young entrepreneurs who participate in the mainstream economy. Incubators such as Ryerson’s Digital Media Zone, the MaRS Discovery District, and Kitchener Waterloo’s Communitech have proven helpful in supporting and growing young companies. Thomas is currently also considering a position at an I.T. testing firm for recruiting Indigenous I.T. workers from the reserves.

Despite not having any idea of the community that awaited him while he was isolated on a farm in his early years, Thomas Burgos has found a sense of belonging in the big city and is committed to creating opportunities for members of the Indigenous community. He added that he intends to still visit the First Peoples@Seneca office once a week as an alumnus, even though he will no longer be a student. Young, dynamic entrepreneurs with strong business sense and potential like Thomas Burgos are changing the faces of First Nations in Canada.

CHAPTER 2
INDIGENOUS ALUMNI

Sunrise over Seneca's King campus. The field in the foreground is a protected archeological site, home to artifacts dating back 20,000 years.



DYLAN MCCUE

BY SHVETA HARIHARAN



Dylan McCue

ENTERING DYLAN MCCUE'S workplace, I am struck by the feel of the fire station. It is cozy and welcoming. There's a kitchen with a well-stocked fridge, a gym with plenty of equipment and a living room with large, comfortable couches and a TV. After introducing himself, McCue presents me to his colleagues, on-call firefighters who are watching a hockey game on the TV. They smile at me good-naturedly and advise me to make myself at home.

Dylan McCue is a firefighter at Toronto Fire Station 432, located in 155 The East Mall, Etobicoke. He is a graduate of Seneca's Pre-Service Education and Training Firefighter program, at the Newnham Campus. He did well in the program, graduating with Honours and was nominated as an Indigenous Student Ambassador.

McCue comes from the Beausoleil First Nation band, located on Christian Island, in Simcoe County, Ontario. The band is part of the Ojibway nation, and has more than 1800 members. In Canada, they are the second-largest Indigenous population, comprising many bands. When he was six years old, McCue moved to the Jane and Finch neighbourhood in Toronto with his father. Growing up in Toronto's cultural melting pot, he says he felt right at home. "I grew up feeling completely accepted. I grew up in a very multi-cultural neighbourhood and there was no discrimination," he says with a smile. "There were people of all backgrounds and I never felt different at all."

McCue has always felt a connection to his Indigenous background, having had frequent visits to the reserve throughout his life. However, his understanding of his First Nations history deepened when Beausoleil First Nation became a part of Canada's largest land claim with the Federal government. "All of our land, mostly made up of islands, are historic traditional fishing grounds," he explains. "When the land was taken—I say taken, because we went to sign the treaty, and they screwed us—we signed away our land instead of securing it. Everything was documented from our language and our perspective, which gave me a good understanding of what actually happened. That definitely strengthened my bond to my background. Through this land claim, I learned about a lot of the things that happened from 1835 to now."

McCue says he was exposed to demons like alcoholism and other addictions on the reserve. However, he also had positive relationships that allowed him to thrive in his life. "It's easy to focus on the messed-up aspects, but I chose to focus on positive things, like the relationship with my father, who was trying to succeed with his business as an arborist," he explains.

"What I've learned from my band is that the best way to change your life is to make everyone in your inner circle bigger and better," he explains with a smile. "We have to help change

the lives of the people around us." McCue's positive outlook is inspirational. However, there are undeniable difficulties within First Nations communities, many of which deeply bother McCue. "For example, there was a Native family that died in a fire, and there was barely any news coverage. I found out that there's rarely documentation of these issues. There are no statistics or numbers for Native people who perish in fires."

As a firefighter, this hits home for McCue. He says that in regular society, the fire department focuses on learning from negative experiences on the job and ensuring they do not happen again in the community. "We'd make a statistic, learn from the mistake and then educate the public," he says. "Yet, here we are in 2017, with Native families dying every day because of poor housing, crappy fire departments—if any at all—and we're not even worthy of a statistic? That really bothers me."

Our discussion then led to another issue, the lack of awareness of Indigenous history in Ontario. "If you see the educational system in Winnipeg, for example, Native Studies is a huge part of the curriculum," he says. "Here in Ontario, it's bad. I can't even begin to tell you how bad it is that we don't put more of a focus on learning about our First Nations people."

I asked McCue why, in his opinion, the Ontario government is not prioritizing Indigenous education as an important part of the curriculum. "It's systemic, and it's racism. How can you not want to know the history of how this country came to be?" What McCue says strikes me with its truth. He adds that without knowledge of Indigenous people, European settlers could not have possibly survived. "How beautiful is a culture that lives symbiotically with nature? A culture that is able to survive, heal itself naturally and have unbelievable, unique societies? It's incredible."

I then asked McCue what his opinion was on the Canadian government's work with First Nations, especially since Trudeau's appointment of the first Indigenous Minister and his

promises to improve Canada's relationship with Indigenous people. "I think they could do more. Like, we have one ferry that takes us to our island, and it's constantly breaking down." The Beausoleil First Nations community is dependent on the 65-year-old ferry, which makes a round-trip 14 times a day. "Instead of the government helping to fund a new one, they just haven't done anything for us," he laments. The ferry is vital to the community because it is the sole way to access the mainland to get goods and services, as well as reach hospitals and medical appointments. McCue explains that he expected more from the Trudeau government, and he feels that his focus is more on international issues. "Our situation at home is so dire, and I don't think the government is focused on helping the issues we have now. And not just Native issues, we have water issues, air quality issues, and everyone agrees that what we are paying for hydro is horrible," says McCue.

While he knows that things can be difficult in these communities, McCue also believes that if there is a will, there is a way. His own experiences prove that. Seventeen years after he graduated high school, he knew he wanted to commit to becoming a firefighter. With the successful completion of the Seneca program, McCue graduated in 2012. He now faced an arduous application process to land his first job, and it wasn't until 2015 that he happily accepted his role at Firestation 432.

When asked about his experience at Seneca, he explains that the program provided him with great hands-on experience. "It was tough, my first semester. I didn't sleep much. We had seven courses and I was working as a bartender as well." After graduating, he realized just how competitive it was to get into a fire department. "The application process was incredibly competitive. When I got hired in 2015, there were only 150 people chosen out of the 5,000 who applied," he explains.



“This is a phenomenal job. In some ways, we live together, eat together, and we’re like family. In my view, this is the best job anyone could have. We help people,” he says, beaming. “That’s why I love what I do, and why I owe so much to my band.” Clearly, the Beausoleil band prioritizes empowering its members through education. McCue says that many members of his band have benefited hugely from a career perspective. “In our band, we actually have people go on to have highly accomplished careers because of that support,” he adds. “For example, if you’ve ever heard of Wanda Nanibush, she’s the Art Gallery of Ontario’s first curator of Indigenous Art. She’s my aunt and comes from my band! She has her master’s from UofT and teaches at the University as well. Frankly, being Native has been fantastic. As a person of First Nations heritage, I actually have dual citizenship,” he says. “So, if I wasn’t, I wouldn’t have been able to live in New York in my 20s, for example. My dad gave me land on my Indian reserve to build a cottage—I wouldn’t have had that. And of course, I wouldn’t have been able to go to school to achieve my dream.”

It is fantastic to learn about the positive effects that the Beausoleil First Nations has had on McCue and others. The impact of the support the band has for its community is clearly far-reaching.

The issues in the First Nations community caused by systemic racism and oppression are the remnants from dark times in our history. However, as McCue’s story illustrates, it would be a disservice and inaccurate to say that all of these experiences are negative. Many experiences showcase the beauty of a community that values and supports its members.

As McCue explains it, the best thing he has gained from his band is their support. The band was able to fund the entirety of his education even with his mortgage and a growing family. Putting that on hold to fund his education and the dream was a huge challenge, but the band helped make it possible.

ROXANNE KROPF-SALAMI

BY SARAH SEQUEIRA



Roxanne Kropf-Salami

“NOT EVERY INDIGENOUS person who has been adopted or fostered has had the same experience that I have,” says Roxanne Kropf-Salami, from Tsay Keh Dene First Nations in the Northern Interior of British Columbia. “My white mother gave me a chance in life.”

The ‘Sixties Scoop’ was at the core of Roxanne’s birth family. In the 1960s, Indigenous children were being taken away from their families and stripped of their culture, leaving them with no identity, only a number that identified who they were and where they originated from. Out of the four children in her family, Kropf-Salami was the only one adopted, while the others were placed within the foster care system. “My adoptive mother was a teacher on the reserve and she was teaching my birth mother, who was still in high school. She knew very well that we were going to be taken away by the government so she asked my adoptive mom to take me, a two-month-old baby, because she knew she could care for me.”

The Sixties Scoop was a very dark time for children of Indigenous people in Canada. Children were removed from their families and placed in foster homes, or up for adoption, beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the late 1980s. The initiative was sponsored by the Canadian government and various churches to educate Indigenous children about different religious values and Euro-Canadian culture. By placing them in the

residential school system, this would increase their chances of becoming part of mainstream society. So they thought.

Kropf-Salami maintains she is one of the lucky ones. Like her siblings, many Indigenous children did not get the opportunity of life like she did. “Out of my family, I was given the opportunity to go to a post-secondary school; I’m very grateful to have been given this opportunity and to be able to further support my family and the Indigenous community,” she says. “I give thanks to my birth mother for making many difficult decisions at a very young age.”

Kropf-Salami began her educational journey in 2011 at Seneca’s Newnham Campus, enrolling in the Social Service Worker-Immigrant and Refugee diploma program. Throughout her time at Seneca she received Anishinabe teachings and had the opportunity to absorb her culture. “Students may not know how lucky they are to have a support service like First Peoples@Seneca,” she says. “We used to do workshops and fun activities as a way of learning. Now I can teach the kids I work with about moccasins and Native teachings, and I’m able to give them a better understanding and help them learn to appreciate the values of our culture.”

“I got my first job at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. The opportunity came to me because I was proactively working with students here at Seneca. My program coordinator encouraged me when I was feeling unsure about the program I was enrolled in. I was on the Aboriginal Education Council and through that involvement I was able to attend many conventions, and speak about my experiences and connect with the audience,” Kropf-Salami says. Kropf-Salami is currently a Social Service Worker at the Enaahdig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre in Midland, Ontario, where she works with high-risk youth. She is able to apply everything she’s learned throughout her time at Seneca to good practice.

When adopted into the Anishinabe cultures and traditions, Kropf-Salami was not able to speak her mother tongue, the Sekani language. But now she is able to go back to her birthplace and experience the cultures that are celebrated there, never forgetting the traditions she’s learned throughout her time at Seneca. “Everything I know is from the First Peoples@Seneca. It helped me ground myself, helping me understand things that were unknown to me; I never understood why I loved nature so much and why I felt peace in that environment. My teachings helped me understand why I love water—women are the water carries and protectors, and men work with the fire,” she says.

It is important to recognize that Roxanne is in the middle of two very different worlds; the world she grew up in with a Mennonite family and the person who fully embraces her teachings from her Indigenous roots. Many Sixties Scoop survivors cannot say that they have lived in two worlds throughout their upbringing, and because of that, they now have a difficult time accepting who they are and where they originate from. “Because of the strict and structured environment that I grew up in, I am able to coexist in the world I live in today. I am able to reach out more and connect with people on a different level because I understand both sides and can explain it to people who really don’t understand; people who’ve never lived it,” she says.

As a mother, Roxanne is trying to teach her child to be open and inclusive to other cultures, religions and teaching values. “I try really hard to teach my daughter to have an open focus on life and when you see people, not to automatically judge them. And to be aware there are different things happening in peoples’ lives every single day,” she says.

Although Kropf-Salami did not grow up feeling like an outcast in her community, not every Indigenous person has the same experience when moving to a major metropolitan city. “I never felt judged; I felt different when I was back home in British Columbia, but when I moved here to Toronto, you’re either one ethnicity or another and you have your own communities to turn to. So everyone is segregated. But back home, everyone knows each other and everyone is willing to help one another, including non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. I never heard racist comments or discriminatory slurs—I never felt that. But when I came to the city, I felt it everywhere I went.”

Moving from a small community to a city where the population is constantly growing can be rather overwhelming, but having a foundation to fall back on can make a difference, as it did with Roxanne. “It’s frustrating when you come from a place where people are constantly helping each other but here, everything has to be done through long processes; it’s a different way of life,” Kropf-Salami says. “Because I came from a place where I always had support and positivity, my transition to the city has been positive because of my upbringing and where I came from. If I didn’t have that, I’d lose my mind.”

Roxanne has come full circle in her journey of life. From being adopted to a Mennonite family, to embracing her new-found Athabaskan culture. “I’m thankful, I’m so incredibly thankful.”

DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR



Drew Hayden Taylor

ESTEEMED SENECA ALUMNI Drew Hayden Taylor (Radio and Television Broadcasting, 1982) is an Ojibway from Curve Lake First Nation. A comedian, playwright, journalist, columnist, storywriter and a filmmaker, Taylor has an extensive career as an artist and communicator.

Taylor's plays have been performed all over the world, and he has worked as writer-in-residence at universities in Canada, the United States and Germany. From 1994 to 1997, Taylor was the Artistic Director of Native Earth Performing Arts. Native Earth received a 1996 Dora Mavor Moore Award for Taylor's play *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth*.

Taylor has written a prodigious number of plays including *In a World Created by a Drunken God*, *The Bootlegger Blues*, *God and the Indian*, *Cerulean Blue* and *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*, winner of the 1992 Chalmers Award. Taylor is the author of the novels *The Night Wanderer* and *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*, as well as the book series *Funny, You Don't Look Like One*. He has also produced, written, directed and/or hosted many documentaries including *Redskins*, *Tricksters* and *Puppy Stew!* and *A Warrior's Legacy: Ontario's First Nations in the Second World War*.

Taylor is the recipient of many awards, most recently the 2010 Ontario Premier's Award for Creative Art and Design and the 2012 Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Award. Taylor's work is taught in Seneca classrooms and a bursary is given each year in his name.

PLAYS PRODUCED BY DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR

400 Kilometers
alterNatives
Cerulean Blue
Contemporary Gothic Indian Vampire Story
Dead White Writer on the Floor
Education is Our Right
Girt Who Loved Her Horses
God and The Indian
In a World Created by a Drunken God
Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth
Raven Stole the Sun
Someday
Spirit Horse
Sucker Falls
Talking Pictures
The All Complete Aboriginal Show Extravaganza
The Baby Blues
The Berlin Blues
The Bootlegger Blues
The Boy in the Treehouse
The Buz'Gem Blues
Three Tricksters
Toronto at Dreamer's Rock
Toronto@Dreamersrock.Com

FICTION BY DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR

Fearless Warriors
Motorcycles & Sweetgrass
The Night Wanderer

NON-FICTION BY DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR

Funny, You Don't Look Like One
Further Adventures of a Blue-Eyed Ojibway:
Funny, You Don't Look Like One Two
Furious Observations of a Blue-Eyed Ojibway:
Funny, You Don't Look Like One Three
Futile Observations of a Blue-Eyed Ojibway:
Funny, You Don't Look Like One Four
News: Postcards from the Four Directions
Take Us to Your Chief and Other Stories
Collections Edited by Drew Hayden Taylor
Drew Hayden Taylor: Essays on His Works
Me Funny
Me Sexy
Me Artsy
Voices: Being Native in Canada
Selected Film Credits by Drew Hayden Taylor
Beachcombers (writer)
In A World Created by a Drunken God (writer)
Mixed Blessings (head writer and creator)
Redskins, Tricksters, and Puppy Stew!
(Writer and Director)
A Warrior Legacy: Ontario's First Nations
in the Second World War (Narrator)

MONICA RUTLEDGE

BY MARYCATHERINE UNSWORTH



Monica Rutledge

IN 1978 MONICA RUTLEDGE was adopted out of foster care along with her two brothers. She was four years old, had lived in two foster homes and ‘The Sixties Scoop’ (which removed First Nations children from their homes and placed them into foster care), was still in effect in Canada.

An Ojibway from Red Lake, Ontario, Monica grew up in Toronto with her adoptive parents and brothers. She describes her childhood as positive, was involved in basketball, soccer, swimming, and track and field about which she was quite passionate.

It wasn’t until she was 14 years old that she gained exposure to her Indigenous customs and culture. SkyDome (now the Rogers Centre) hosted Pow Wows in the early 90s to which her father, a now-retired Toronto police officer, took Monica and her brothers. Both adoptive parents were supportive and helped their children gain exposure to their Indigenous culture, and even enrolled them in Ojibway lessons to learn the language.

“My parents were open to having a conversation about our culture. They didn’t prevent us from learning more and were open to answer any questions that we had.”

Ever since Monica was a little girl she was interested in becoming a police officer, just like her dad. In Grade twelve, she volunteered and did her co-op with The Toronto Police Service, in the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit.

The Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit (APU) was founded in 1992 and became the first such unit within a major urban police service in Canada. It was established to deal specifically with the issues faced by the city’s Indigenous community.

The unit allowed her to be among other Indigenous people who were police officers, and Rutledge credits the APU with deepening her interest in finding out more about her roots and helping her self-identify.

“Having volunteered here gave me more of an insight into who I was, who I am. I have a better understanding of my identity and of Native Culture. And that confidence makes me want to know more.”

Rutledge has worked on numerous projects that highlight the poverty and suicide epidemic that First Nations people in Canada are facing. She knew she wanted to become a police officer, and after the positive experience she had as a volunteer, she enrolled in Seneca’s Law Enforcement program, knowing that her end goal was to work in the Aboriginal Peacekeeping Unit.

“When I did my training, I knew this was where I wanted to be, working in the APU.”

After seven years of hard work, dedication and some setbacks, including failing her first admittance test to the police force, she became a police officer with the Toronto Police Service in 2001. It was after 10 years in uniform that she began working in the APU, and today, she runs the office at her division. As the officer in charge of her unit, Constable Rutledge is taking the steps needed to further publicize it. The main objective for this office is to continue

building the bridge between the Indigenous community and Toronto Police Service. The APU directly deals with issues Indigenous people in the community are facing. Many of these issues are often overlooked by the general public due to the lack of education and representation in the media. Some of these issues are personal to community members and Monica assists them herself. Others are at a national scale, including the Missing and Murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) throughout Canada, which is an incredibly underrepresented crisis within our country.

“When it comes down to learning about our history, we can all say we’ve learned about First Nations history, but we haven’t actually heard the truth about residential schools and the impact it has had on thousands of Indigenous families, even to this day. The intergenerational trauma... that was not taught in schools.” Intergenerational trauma is the transmission of historical oppression and its negative consequences throughout generations. This is incredibly dominant through the First Nations community across Canada, and it has impacted the health and well being of community members.

The APU in Toronto is slowly, surely and positively impacting the lives of everyone that members of the unit come in contact with.

As no one in law enforcement has a typical day-to-day schedule at work, Rutledge is no different while working within her unit. The APU is closely tied to the Indigenous schools located in the city through The Headstart program, which is affiliated with Native Family and Child Services. Officers often go into the First Nations schools to talk to students aged three to five where they may be doing something as simple as discussing winter safety with the children. The APU attempts to build trust within the community and its members. The presence of the unit within the classroom familiarizes the children with the uniform, which builds trust between the youth and the police.

“A lot of children at this age do witness mom and dad being handcuffed and taken away by police, so it’s good to establish a trusting relationship with kids that young.” Creating a positive

relationship with children is one way that the APU is trying to bridge the gap between officers and the Indigenous community.

Rutledge came from a supportive family and their support and motivation plays a large role in her successes today. The APU provides support and mentoring to the community, and the children that are apart of it. “I’m proud of where I started and where I’ve come, it’s taken drive and motivation. To have the proper support behind you, I think that’s what a number of our youth need. If you fall down you need someone to help you back up.”

Nine times out of 10, Rutledge isn’t in uniform when she’s on the job. She works hard to gain the trust of community members in order for them to realize that they are here to help and not hurt their situation. Talking to people on an individual level and building mutual respect to help the community, brings the community closer together and allows the APU to do their jobs.

The Indigenous community in Toronto is largely connected, which can also help the police do their jobs and solve their cases. A few years ago, the police were looking for an individual who had come to Toronto and was wanted for a sexual assault. Thanks to Rutledge’s connections within the community she was able to quickly find and arrest him.

“I’m giving back to the community and they’re giving back to me in the sense of my culture.” Monica Rutledge is a mother of three children and is teaching them about their Indigenous history and encouraging them to be proud of their Indigenous background. Recently, she was able to connect with her birth family, using Facebook, and had the opportunity to meet them in Winnipeg. “Having the opportunity to meet my birth family was great! To meet someone who’s a blood relative, you see the connection, the facial features. It’s a sense of belonging, a sense of coming home—of coming full circle.”

CHAPTER 3
INDIGENOUS FASHION



Sunlight on a woodland trail in Bass Lake Provincial Park, traditional home of Rama First Nation.

D'ARCY MOSES



D'ARCY MOSES is a Dene designer based in the Northwest Territories. A member of the Pehdzeh Ki First Nation, he was born in Wrigley, Northwest Territories and grew up with his adopted family in Canmore, Alberta. His first collection was featured in the Toronto Festival of Fashion New Designer Show in 1991, and he has won the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for his contribution to Canadian Fashion and the Arts. Moses noted that his inclusion in the show, despite his lack of formal training, was his biggest career break, being only one of 10 designers chosen.

Moses explains that his greatest source of inspiration is his Indigenous ancestry, and the mentorship of hereditary Chief Alice Jeffery and Chief Leonard George. He credits his time with Chief Alice Jeffrey and her welcome into the Pacific Northwest Indigenous community as his introduction to his Indigenous roots. His fashion inspirations are icons of couture: Yves Saint Laurent, Balenciaga and Alexander McQueen. His designs include echoes of his Dene heritage. He notes, "What gives our identity as designers is our sense of community, and I think that is what we're trying to express here." Moses left a career as a furrier in Toronto to move back to the north and teach workshops on clothes-making to the Dene Nation. Moses has also worked with Nats'enelu, a government-sponsored fashion business which produced sportswear. Further, Moses has marketed his own line of fur, Genuine McKenzie Valley Furs, which was sourced entirely from wild fur. Moses' clothes are featured in a number of private collections, and the Government of the Northwest Territories

has purchased a number of Moses' pieces, which were featured in a retrospective of his work. Moses is noted as "well schooled in the traditional ways of his Dene people, yet his approach to fashion outerwear design and the treatment of fur and fabric is revolutionary."

Moses has several pieces included in the Seneca Fashion Resource Centre. One piece is a sleeveless dress that is hand-painted and trimmed with birchbark, glass beads and shells. The companion dress, also housed at the Fashion Resource Centre, was donated in 1994 by the Toronto Fashion Incubator. It is a sleeveless, strapless gown made in muslin. The skirt is made up of four panels, and the back and front panels feature a hand-painted medicine wheel design. The back closure is made of leather and there are mother of pearl buttons decorating the garment. The dress was included in one of Moses' earliest fashion shows. Moses sees the designs coming from his community as equal to anything in the fashion world: "This is the real thing. You know what I mean? It's haute couture."

"My advice to Fashion graduates," he said in a 2011 interview with Fashion Resource Centre coordinator Dale Peers, "is to do what you love, but keep the designs realistic because garments have to be sold by retailers, and worn by customers. Do your best to keep your designs beautiful, keep your financial house in order and trust your instincts."



D'arcy Moses
Dress
n.d., Painted muslin,
shells, leather and
mother of pearl,
Seneca Fashion
Resource Centre.



D'arcy Moses
Skirt
n.d., Painted muslin,
birch, leather and
mother of pearl,
Seneca Fashion
Resource Centre.



D'arcy Moses
Gown
n.d., Painted muslin,
leather shells and
mother of pearl,
Seneca Fashion
Resource Centre.





D'arcy Moses
Dress
n.d., Muslin, shell
and birch, Seneca
Fashion Resource
Centre.

D'arcy Moses
Skirts
n.d., Painted
muslin, leather and
mother of pearl,
Seneca Fashion
Resource Centre.



CHAPTER 4
TRADITIONAL DANCE



Looking north across the St. Lawrence River, since the sixteenth century the gateway to northern North America for European colonial powers.

DEHMIN CLELAND

BY EVA PHAM



Dehmin Cleland

WRAPPED IN A dark, oversized and plush blanket scarf and a pair of chunky, blue-rimmed glasses that cover half her face, Dehmin Cleland is the picture of composure. She doesn't have a trace of makeup on, which makes her look even younger than her 20 years. I had heard much about Dehmin Cleland from other people before I met her, namely that she's a designer, a dancer, and student mentor. But I was lucky enough to get a glimpse of the day-to-day Cleland. Someone who was just like me, who studies hard, who works, who has a story.

As we chat, we are interrupted quite a number of times while Dehmin stops to talk to some students coming into the First Peoples@Seneca office. Some briefly popping in to ask where a professor is, others staying longer to schedule a time to meet up later on for her help. This quiet side contrasts with the young woman who moves so confidently in traditional Indigenous dance while wearing bold, eye-catching ceremonial regalia.

Cleland comes from the Wikwemikong Unceded First Nations, which is also known as Wiky, and The Saginaw Chippewa tribe. Although her immediate family (her parents and younger brother) did not originate from the Wikemikong community on Manitoulin Island, the Osawamicks (her family name) still live there today, where most people are Ojibway.

As a little girl, Dehmin Cleland was taken to Pow Wows, social gatherings at which people come together to enjoy food, music, traditional regalia and dance.

She grew up participating in them and relishing the special celebration. Pow Wows give Indigenous people an opportunity to unite and proudly celebrate their First Nations heritage. "My parents had hired a family friend to make some traditional regalia (ceremonial clothing) for me for a Pow Wow when I was 11 years old. I was impatient waiting for someone else to make it for me," she said. "So that's when I decided I wanted to create my own." She started crafting her own clothing for social gatherings because of her interest in different designs and fits that she liked. No one else could create something that could satisfy her needs. One of the first things she learned to do was beadwork, something she still does today. Her father taught her the basics of the customary methods, like the simple stitch. Her mother and aunt taught her more intricate stitches after she realized her talent in beadwork. "My younger brother knows how to do beadwork too, but he doesn't like to," she says. In fact, beadwork was the first thing that helped her discover a love of designing. The historic Indigenous practice is time-consuming, but holds a deep significance to Indigenous culture. "Many people put their initials into their beadwork pieces to watermark it. A symbolic process many Indigenous people partake in while creating their artwork is stitching two sets of beads, working contrasting colours into their work. This represents two sets of footprints: The first are the steps you initially take on Earth, and the second represents the last footprints you'll take when you leave."



ALEX BIPATNATH

BY MARI SATOH

I was able to see some of Dehmin Cleland's beautiful pieces: a pair of strawberry earrings and medallions. The amount of time and effort she spent on each item was clear. Each piece was thoughtfully designed and patiently crafted.

This initial spark of creation ignited a fire in her, compelling her to create various forms of art. From woodburning to sketching, dancing, and learning how to make designs and apparel, she was able to effortlessly find her own calling in fashion. Knowing these historical and established methods have inspired her to incorporate many traditional First Nations designs into her project pieces that she proudly wears: delicate floral patterns on elegant dresses, colourful and delicious strawberries splattered onto makeup bags, and playful beaded fruits turned into earrings. With most of her projects stem from what she learned when she was younger, she gave me a smile before telling me she believes traditional regalia is like having gold. It was clear that she understood the value and historic significance behind ceremonial clothing.

The incorporation and transition from traditional to modern has been built into Dehmin Cleland's creations and has helped showcase her own artistic flair. Most of her other designs also include floral prints, which are believed by many First Nations people to offer protection and healing properties to those who wear them.

The same healing sentiment can also be found in dance. Out of the four Indigenous women's dances—jingle, traditional, fancy, and smoke dance—jingle is best known as being a healing dance. But Cleland, who dances mostly traditional, believes all dance has healing properties to it. She feels powerful and beautiful when she dances, being able to create art through movement. It connects people to the rhythms of nature, helping them sync with one another.

So what's next for the Seneca student? As she finishes up her last year at Seneca in the Fashion Design program, there are many opportunities that await her. She plans to study fashion merchandising and business in Toronto. She mentioned that one day, she wants to be her own boss. But she already is. She

has created her own platform known as DOC Designs to display her artwork. Her creations seem to be advancing as she dives deeper into her career. "Fashion is the only thing I'm good at," she joked.

Cleland is free to express herself and her ideas in a positive environment where she proudly displays her heritage to others in her work. Although she does believe her school is supportive, Cleland is uncomfortable discussing her student sponsorship at Seneca. She doesn't want people to think that her scholarship was just handed to her because she comes from a First Nations background. "I don't want people to think I get everything for free. I have to work hard for a lot of it. I have to get good grades to maintain my sponsorship. It's not free," she says. Many people believe Indigenous people are being generously compensated and given many opportunities for free, but that simply isn't the case. As a student ambassador with the First People@Seneca office, Cleland has educated her peers on her heritage. She has hosted several beadwork sessions, become a leader for Seneca International Days by hosting the Indigenous Traditional Women's Exhibition Dance, assisted with decorating year-end banquets, and planned social gatherings. She has given a lot back to the Seneca community and aims to continue to change the negative preconceived ideas people may have.

"Seneca has been very supportive of me and the incorporation of my background into my work. I have teachers who love my ideas. There was one teacher in particular who said I was one of the first people to bring politics into design, which is imperative coming from the mind of a young First Nations person."

This hard working third-year Fashion Design student is an Indigenous student ambassador who helps other students with homework. She is the woman whose interests have led her to pursue a career in fashion. On top of that, Dehmin Cleland is determined to change people's perception of fashion and break the stereotype paired with Indigenous people, one stitch at a time.



Alex Bipatnath

FOR GENERATIONS, INDIGENOUS women's fancy shawl dancers have been said to mimic the movements of a butterfly bursting out of a cocoon. Draped over the shoulders of the women are ceremonial shawls, the multi-coloured blankets extending well beyond their arms. On these blankets are intricate patterns of embroidery and fringe along the edges. Beneath the shawls, women wear long dresses that complement the detailed beadwork on their moccasins and leggings. Various accessories such as earrings, bracelets, yokes, hairpieces, and headbands complete the look.

But what is more mesmerizing than the elaborate detailing on the costumes are the rhythmic movements that bring the regalia to life. Colours blur together as the performers twirl repetitively, their arms swaying from side to side. The dancers bounce with every drum beat, their fringe accentuating their every move. As the dancers' fast footwork keeps pace with the tempo, their heels barely graze the ground.

Amongst the group of dancers is Alex Bipatnath, emerging in her signature colours of orange, black, green, yellow and white. She stays light on her feet, and gracefully whirls around her stage, synchronising with the other performers. The wide grin on her face tells us there is nowhere else she would rather be.

At age 21, Alex has lived anything but an ordinary life. For as long as she can remember, her First Nations culture played a large role in her upbringing. While most children sat at home watching cartoons, she was being exposed to her Ojibway roots at cultural gatherings called powwows. These gatherings which involved dancing, singing, drumming

and crafting were first introduced to her by her mother, an Indigenous woman from a small reserve called Shawanaga First Nations, in Ontario.

As a regular craft vendor at Pow Wows, Alex's mother sold dreamcatchers, earrings, chokers, bracelets and more, with her two-year-old daughter glued to her side, observing the traditional rituals. These mother-daughter outings became routine for Alex, and her love of Native dance and culture blossomed. Even as an infant, she couldn't stay still when the women's fancy shawl dancing began. Before she could walk, she would bounce to the beat of the drum as the dancers twirled. It would only be a matter of time before she became a dancer herself. Sure enough, a few years later, her mother presented her with her first traditional dance costume, adorned with bumble bee prints. Immediately, she paraded around in what would become her signature colours, mirroring the footwork of the older girls.

Her cultural interest only increased when she started kindergarten at Eastview Junior Public School in Scarborough. She lived in government-funded housing for people of Indigenous origin, commonly referred to as 'Native housing,' where her family was surrounded by others that shared her backgrounds and customs. Naturally, with such a large Indigenous population in the vicinity, Pow Wows were regularly hosted by the school. It was here that she studied a form of writing called syllabic and learned to speak, read and write in Ojibway. To Alex, those were the best years of her life.



Her first performances at Pow Wows took place during these years, where she would accompany her mother who was a storyteller. As Alex danced effortlessly to her mother's singing and hand-drumming, a crowd of enthusiastic observers would gather to watch the show. Over time, performances occurred more frequently and people began to recognize her. Even after trading in her original bumble bee regalia for new traditional garments, she always stuck to her signature colors, ensuring spectators remembered her. Eventually, she branched out and started her solo career as a performer, visiting elementary schools to dance for assemblies during multicultural week. With more practice, she gained confidence as a dancer, developing her own flair to the basic steps of women's fancy shawl dancing.

"People always ask me if it's something that is choreographed, but it is not. Dancing for me is like breathing. I have a certain variation of steps, but I would take in the dynamic of the other dancers and I would either dance the same or a little higher or lower. It's not competing, I like to see the best dancers and learn from them," Alex says.

In Grade six, she faced a challenge that so many children before her have grappled with. She was forced to move from one town to another, which meant switching schools. It was at this time that she first felt detached from her culture. Her heritage was no longer in the spotlight, something she was not used to.

"I felt like I was in a community where everyone knew who I was, and what my culture was and then I went to a different school in Ajax where people didn't really understand my background. This made Grade seven and eight challenging years for me," Alex said.

Between the ages of 12 to 17, Alex lived a double life. One day, she would be attending a school where her heritage was separate from her identity, and the next, performing at a Pow

Wow where her culture flourished. At times, she would find herself wishing that students could have been provided more opportunities to learn about current First Nations culture. Despite these challenges, the world of dance never let her forget who she was. In Grade twelve, her two lives merged when she decided to unleash her Indigenous heritage into the hallways of her school. In her final year of high school, Alex was given the task of completing an installation for an art course. She decided that during the five-minute break in between classes, she would perform her dance in the lobby of her school for her final assignment. The lobby was the common area between the main office, library and cafeteria, which made it the perfect place to attract an audience. Determined to make a lasting impression, she carted a big speaker onto her 'stage' and emerged in her signature regalia, ready to perform.

"As soon as the bell rang, I started dancing and this huge crowd formed around me. Soon, everyone was recording and cheering. I just wanted it to be a cultural shock." Alex says she will tell this story until she dies. This performance led to greater things for her. With a three-minute dance, she established her identity with her peers. As a result, she was given the opportunity to go to a leadership camp for a weekend fully paid by the school, where she was the only self-identified Indigenous student. It had been a long time since she could bring her heritage into her school.

From then on, Alex strived to promote the understanding of her cultural roots. She began to perform at events that support these ideals, including an annual gathering hosted by Fort York to educate people about Indigenous traditions. During the one year she attended York University, she participated in their Pow Wow, while continuing to dance in and outside of school. When searching for post-secondary schools, she wanted to find a school with an Indigenous student centre. At Seneca, she was

thrilled to find inclusivity in a tight-knit community where students of common interests are able to study and socialize. Having a hub that identified her culture means everything to her.

Today, Alex remains proud of her roots and studies fitness and health promotion at Seneca. She plans further studies in nutrition at Ryerson University. Her long-term goals include becoming a licensed naturopathic doctor and eventually, graduating with a PhD on a subject to be decided upon later in her career.

As Alex embarks on her dream, she also resumes her role as a student ambassador for the third straight year. As an ambassador, she works at the First Peoples@Seneca office on Seneca's Newnham campus, where she is responsible for answering any questions that students or faculty may have regarding the organization, as well as planning and advertising cultural events on campus. As a result, she has had the opportunity to interact with many distinguished people such as David Agnew, President of Seneca. She encourages both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to stop by the office and see what services are available.

If past experiences have taught her one thing, it's to continue to celebrate her culture by forever showcasing it to the rest of the world.

"When you fill out an application and it asks if you are Indigenous, Métis, First Nations, etc., I will always say I am Ojibway; I am Indigenous because I am proud of who I am. We are not artifacts, we are still in existence."



CHAPTER 5
INDIGENOUS ARTWORK



A pathway through parkland adjacent to Black Creek and the Humber River. Toronto parks include several protected traditional burial mounds.

ARTHUR RENWICK

BY KAITLYNN TOMASELLI

INDIGENOUS CANADIAN ARTIST and musician Arthur Renwick's home community is in the northern coastal region of Kitimat, British Columbia, where he is a member of Haisla First Nation. Renwick spent a lot of his high school days in darkroom facilities as he always had an interest in photographic art. He moved from his home community to Vancouver to attend college where Renwick took a Pre-Historic Art course in which he studied art from the European Altamari and Lascaux caves. But he walked out of the exam in protest, angry that thousands of years of Indigenous art here in Canada was not being studied or recognized. Renwick subsequently attended Emily Carr University of Art and Design and studied photography, followed by a Fine Arts degree at Vancouver Community College, and then Master of Fine Arts degree from Concordia University in Montreal.

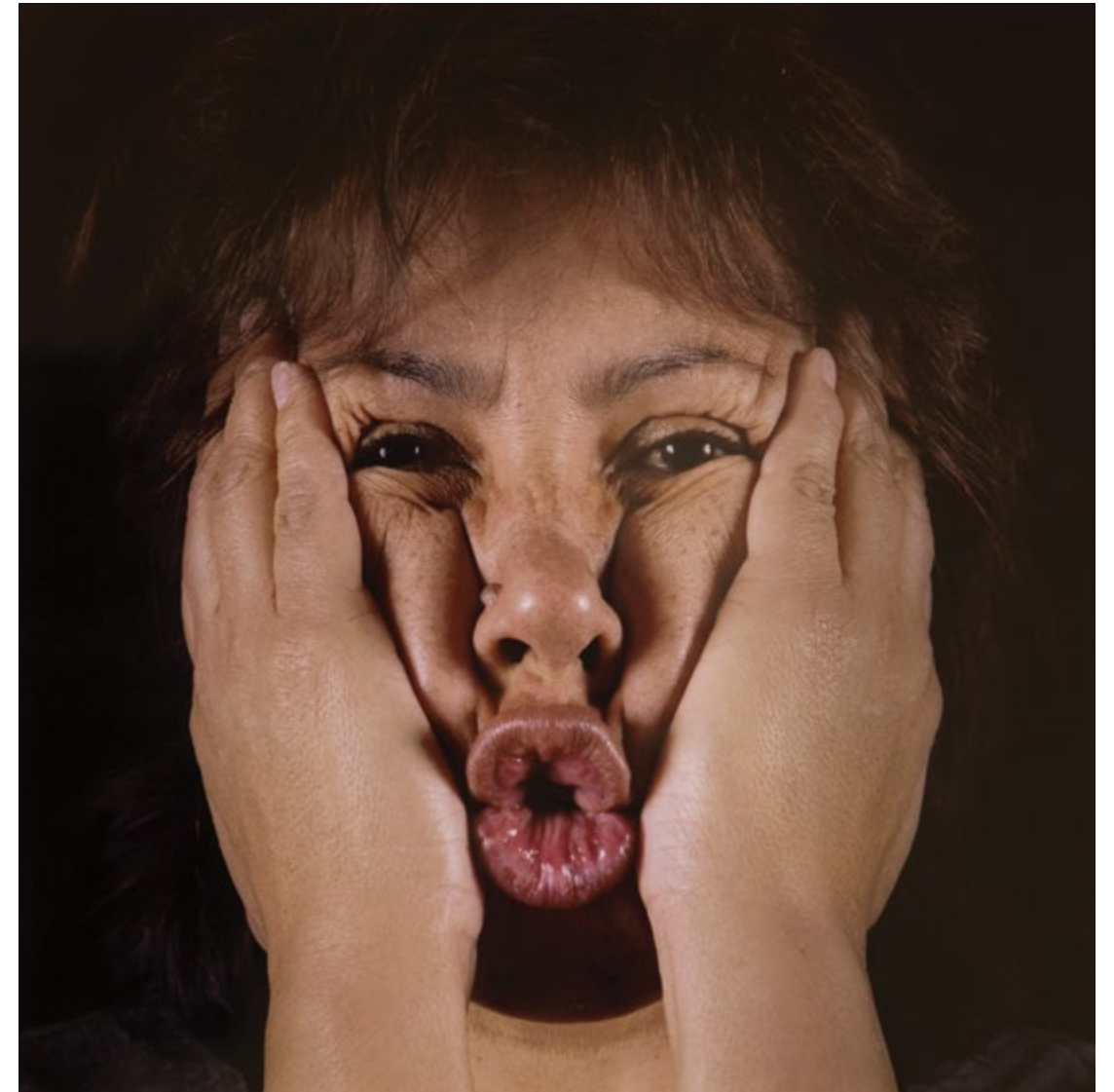
Renwick has received many Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts awards, as well as the K. M. Hunter artist award. In 2004, Renwick had major exhibitions featuring the *Chiefs of the Earth and Sky* series and the *Totem Hysteria* series. From 2006 through 2009, he began one of his most important works of art called the *Mask* series. Renwick has mentioned that his brother, Burton F. Amos, a famous carver and mask-maker, inspired the series. While Renwick was looking at his brother's work, he could see his brother in a lot of the masks that he created, and this sparked Renwick's inspiration to create masks of actual faces.

Renwick decided to capture close-ups of Indigenous artists, writers and intellectuals who would make masks by reconfiguring their faces through pushing, pulling, pinching and

playing with their faces. Renwick wanted his subjects to think about how Indigenous people had been portrayed in photography and to 'make a face' in response. The distorted faces became the masks. This work highlights many people's misunderstandings of the reality of Indigenous people, misunderstandings perpetuated through stereotypes. Renwick remains true to his traditional Indigenous art and history; however, he also represents something new—the *Mask* series is officially classified as contemporary art.

Seneca has prints of *Rebecca*, *Michael*, *Carla* in its permanent art collection. One face rounds the mouth and pushes it together with two hands. The second face uses fingers to cover the forehead and pull down the lips. The third pulls down the mouth and loops it into an unnatural set of lips. The distortions that Renwick intends are obvious in these portraits.

Viewers of Renwick's *Mask* series have said that the collection makes them feel small and diminished, that it is disruptive, confrontational or mocking. This is the reaction Renwick intended to spark. The grimaces and size of the pictures can create discomfort. Even family and friends are unable to recognize the subjects in the prints. Comparatively, Indigenous viewers may see themselves through Renwick's work, which protests the idea that Indigenous people are vanishing, and instead makes them larger than life.



Arthur Renwick (b. 1965)
Mask Series, 2006-2009
Rebecca. Archival ink jet
prints, 116 x 111.8 cm



Arthur Renwick (b. 1965)
Mask Series, 2006-2009
Michael. Archival ink jet
prints, 116 x 111.8 cm



Arthur Renwick (b. 1965)
Mask Series, 2006-2009
Carla. Archival ink jet
prints, 116 x 111.8 cm

CARL BEAM

CARL BEAM, an Ojibway artist, was born on May 24, 1943 on Manitoulin Island, and passed away in 2005 from complications from diabetes. Beam attended the Kootenay School of Arts in 1971, now part of Selkirk College, in Nelson, British Columbia, and finished his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Victoria. He also attended the University of Alberta and eventually started to develop what became his signature style, avoiding more traditional forms of art like that of the Woodland School. Instead he adopted an artistic style centered around photographic and collage-style paintings, similar to that of U.S. artist Robert Rauschenberg.

When Beam started his career as an artist in the 1970s, his work primarily centered on Anishinaabe worldviews, with comparisons to Western perspectives. Curator Ryan Rice noted that Beam used messages of his culture to combat Western perspectives, a result of Beam's experiences in the residential school system. Rice writes, "Beam unravels the complex mechanism of colonialism, acknowledging it as a process of conquest and discovery but framing it from an affirmative position of 'survivance,' an idea based on the postmodern, post-colonial theories of the Chippewa writer and cultural critic Gerald Vizenor." Rice noted this made Beam more socially conscious about these issues, and Beam wanted to make sure that history did not ignore the 'other.' Beam described his own work by saying, "My works are like little puzzles, interesting little games. I play a game of dreaming ourselves as each other. In this, we find out that we're all basically human." In 1985, Beam's painting

The North American Iceberg (so named as a response to the European Iceberg Exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario) was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada. This was ground-breaking, the first piece of contemporary art by an Indigenous artist bought by the National Gallery.

Like the other Beam pieces in the Seneca art collection, this piece seems to contain elements of the scientific world crossed with the traditional world. In the piece, Beam juxtaposes a painting of the Indigenous warrior *Mato-Topé*, taken from a 19th century travelogue, and pairs it with an image of different phases of a celestial body, likely the moon. Under the picture of the warrior in this piece, there is a reference to *Mato-Topé* text, "adorned with the insignia of his warlike deeds." The image of *Mato-Topé* is a recreation of the painting done by the Swedish painter Karl Bodmer entitled *Mato-Topé*, printed in the book Maximilian, Prince of Wied's *Travels in the Interior of North America*, during the years 1832–1834. It is possible that Beam is trying to make the connection between the anthropology practiced by European painters like Karl Bodmer, George Caitlin and Paul Kane, who painted Indigenous people. Beam is linking these European images to people's fascination with space, and wanting to colonise and capture images of the unknown. This also delves into the intertwined and problematic concepts of exploration and discovery. Like much of Beam's work, there are many interpretations to these "puzzles."



Carl Beam

Mato-topé

n.d., Monoprint:
photo emulsion
and ink on paper



Decorated Canadian Indigenous WWII veteran, Phillip Favel, is interviewed in the film *The Pass System*.

THE PASS SYSTEM

Released 2015

ALEX WILLIAMS, *Writer, Director, Producer and Cinematographer*

JAMES CULLINGHAM, *Executive Producer*

TANTOO CARDINAL, *Narration*

CRIS DERKSON, *Music Composition and Performance*

IGAL HECHT, *Editor*

AFTER THE NORTHWEST Resistance of 1885, Canada's first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, approved a pass system that for over 60 years required First Nations people to have permits to leave their reserves. These permits were issued at the pleasure of the local Indian Agent. From day one, the Canadian government knew this segregationist pass system had no legal basis.

The pass system too often kept First Nations parents from their children in residential schools, from visiting relatives, from access to towns and cities, and from enjoying the basic freedom of mobility that every other Canadian took for granted.

The Pass System documentary film is the result of a five-year investigation involving extensive, pan-Canadian archival research and elders' oral history testimony, revealing a system that appears to be much more widespread than previously thought. The film documents the pass system and places it within historical context, which is essential to understanding the system's many impacts that reverberate to this day.

Of note is that the film has Seneca connections. In 2011, independent filmmaker Alex Williams contacted Seneca Professor James Cullingham, whose 1997 film *We Have Such Things at Home* documented links between Canada and South Africa over Indigenous policy. Alex explained that he had an idea for a film featuring the use of passes and permits in First Nation communities in the Canadian West. He had been considering a theatrical

work with playwright Tara Beagan, but would prefer to produce a documentary film. James agreed to be involved in the film's production, as executive producer.

Alex, who was raised in Saskatoon in Treaty 6, followed up with successful applications for funding from Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council, and began shooting footage during trips to Saskatchewan and Alberta.

By 2014 James believed there was enough footage to begin editing, and recommended that he hire Igal Hecht, a former Seneca student, as editor. Journalism program students Safa Minhas and Christina Turner assisted during the final stages of film production. Legendary actor and activist Tantoo Cardinal (*Dances with Wolves*) agreed to narrate, and as the film neared completion, test screenings were held with Elders from western First Nations.

After a screening for Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), a pre-sale of the film was negotiated which helped ensure completion of post-production, and the film was released at the 2015 Vancouver International Film Festival. *The Pass System* has subsequently been aired on APTN and CBC, and shown at over 50 public screenings across Canada, from the Northwest Territories to Nova Scotia. Most recently, *The Pass System* has been nominated for two Canadian Screen Awards: Best History Documentary, and Best Editorial Research.

Jay Bell Redbird

(b. 1966)

Our Home

This artwork was unveiled at the Newnham campus on April 8, 2011 by Seneca President David Agnew and Gary Lipinski, President of Métis Nation of Ontario. The original painting, commissioned by First Peoples@Seneca, combines traditional Indigenous imagery together with a representation of Seneca's Newnham campus. A self-taught artist, Jay Bell Redbird is a member of the Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve, and exhibits his work regularly in Toronto and regional galleries.



PADDY PETERS

BY ANNA KHASHCHYNA

PADDY PETERS, AN Ojibway painter and printmaker, was born on Pikangikum First Nation in 1956. Pikangikum Reserve is situated 100 km northwest of Red Lake, Ontario. Peters was influenced by Norval Morrisseau, the pioneer and creator of the modern Woodland School of Art, and by Daphne Odjig, ‘mother’ of the Woodland School. Peters emerged in the late 1970s alongside other artists who represent the School in both form and subject. Later, Peters became the member of the Triple K Cooperative, a First Nations silkscreen company based in Red Lake, which produced the work of several important artists within the Woodland School. Peters was shown alongside other Triple K artists in the show “Contemporary Native Art of Canada—Silk Screens from the Triple K Co-operative, Red Lake, Ontario,” exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, in 1977.

The modern Woodland School of Art has roots in the Triple K Cooperative. Joshim, Henry and Goyce Kakegamic were the brothers-in-law of Norval Morrisseau and in 1973, after learning printmaking techniques at Open Studio in Toronto, Joshim Kakegamic and his brothers opened the Triple K Cooperative. Joshim viewed this as a way to keep creative control over his own work. Besides Kakegamic’s and Morrisseau’s works, the Cooperative made prints for other artists of the Woodland School including Paddy Peters, Barry Peters and Saul Williams. Studio artists produced work reflective of their own history

and culture. The Cooperative, and all artists involved, played a very important role in providing opportunities for Indigenous artists to be included in galleries, and to access a fine arts education. The Triple K Cooperative currently exists online and as a physical gallery in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Affection, the Paddy Peters artwork in Seneca’s art collection, is a silkscreen, the medium of the Triple K Cooperative. The print doesn’t employ the Woodland style of bright and vivid colours. It has no animal figures, lines of communication or transformations. Peters’ work is more minimalist.

Affection depicts the relationship between mothers and their children, as well as between the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. This theme also appears in Daphne Odjig’s piece *Mother and Child* (1975). The correlation between the artist’s culture and that of his oppressors’ culture is a glimpse into Peters’ feelings on his own position in modern society. It is evidence of Reconciliation in action: the connection of two completely different cultures in one art piece. In addition, Peters’ piece features the love of a mother for her child. In other words, Peters depicts universal feelings with characters and signifiers not common to his Indigenous culture, using the visual style inherited from his Indigenous culture. In this way, Peters becomes a cross-cultural artist, with his roots in Indigenous visual culture, reconciled in action with Euro-Canadian culture.

In recent years, Peters has switched roles from artist to community leader. Unfortunately, Peters’ native Pikangikum community is experiencing problems with illness, crime and other social challenges such as suicide, alcoholism, drug addiction and abuse incidents. As chief of the band, Peters is drawing national attention to Pikangikum’s poor living conditions. He is also very important in the Whitefeather Forest project, which seeks to conserve an area of boreal forest connected to the Pikangikum First Nation.



Paddy Peters
Affection, 1979
Serigraph, 6/50

PITSEOLAK ASHOONA

BY SHAHROZ DHILLON

INUIT ARTIST PITSEOLAK Ashoona was born in 1904 while her family was traveling through the Canadian north, between Quebec and Baffin Island. As a young girl, Ashoona travelled a lot with her Inuit family along the coast of Baffin Island. Ashoona married young and bore seventeen children. Her husband died prematurely in 1960. After his death, Ashoona permanently settled in Cape Dorset and was one of the earliest artists to come out of that region. She had a remarkable vision that enabled her to create drawings of the past.

James Houston, an artist, writer and administrator charged by the government with helping to promote northern artists and their art, helped Ashoona get her work appreciated in different regions of Canada. After seeing the rich artistic work of Indigenous Canadians, Houston set up an arts and crafts shop in Cape Dorset and encouraged Inuit people to create more art. Ashoona was a self-taught artist who made drawings of stories, copying oral histories into images on paper. She learned her art through repetition and experimentation.

Ashoona created pictures that illustrated life before European contact; she wanted people to know traditional ways of the Inuit people. Seeing everything changing in southern Canada, she didn't want her northern culture to be forgotten. Ashoona had a desire to express her favourite subjects in her artwork and she wanted to convey the movement of all things, which included people, animals and birds, as well as her homeland.

Ashoona developed her own style of art by using lines to express visual elements, and this was perhaps her strongest skill. She said, "I draw the whole thing first and then I colour it. I do the whole drawing before I finish it." Her technique of drawing the outline and then later colouring in the pieces, like a colouring book, may seem simple but isn't. It means that she had to know where everything in the design would be placed before colouring. Ashoona's skill was to keep her drawings clean and her lines significant throughout her artwork. She had a remarkable ability to leave white negative space in her artwork, which allowed the artwork to breathe throughout all the visual elements. Ashoona would draw from her memories of the land she used to live on, having travelled so many places from a young age.

Young Bears, part of Seneca's art collection, was created by Ashoona in 1977. It was one of the most influential works to come out of Cape Dorset. It was done like much of her work, by first sketching out the drawing in pencil and then colouring it. From there, the original drawing was reproduced using a flat stone block to carve out the negative space of the image. It was coloured using master inks and the printmaking technique of pressing the block over a piece of paper to create the print.

The piece depicts three black bears with little white specks on them, and two smaller bears, also coloured in black. White space surrounds the whole image. Ashoona chose to draw the bears because they are something that reflects her culture, environment and tradition. Ashoona used the *Young Bears* art piece to depict the people of the Arctic territories, their animals, and spirit creatures.



Pitseolak Ashoona
Young Bears, 1977
Stone cut and stencil

CHAPTER 6
THE LAND



Sunset over Christian Island in Georgian Bay, home to Beausoleil First Nation.

THE POWER OF SENECA'S BEES

BY JESSICA SINGH



Painted bee hives, part of the rooftop apiary at the Newnham campus.

ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2016, eight Seneca faculty, staff, students and friends, made their way up to the rooftop of Seneca's main campus, on Finch Avenue East, to check on Seneca's bees. Although the temperature was below freezing and it had just stopped snowing, our group excitedly hurried onto the roof for the rare opportunity to see the bees. Our group was excited because out of Seneca's ten campuses, the Newnham campus is the only one to have a bee apiary. Cars whizzed by on the highway next to us as we stood on the rooftop overlooking the entire campus. Everything in sight was covered in white, except for four beautiful hives, whose colourfully painted patterns and symbols stood out amongst everything else.

Our group headed over to the hives on the rooftop, including Don Forster, Custodial and Support Services, who has the ability to unlock the elevator, allowing us to get on the roof. Forster is also a private bee keeper and was excited to work with local bee keeper, Brian Hamlin, to check on the health of Seneca's bees. We were also joined by William Humber, Director of the Office of Eco-Seneca Initiatives and Director of the Energy Training Office within the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering Technology. Humber originally reached out to Hamlin to bring the bees to Seneca, once he discovered their existence in the Portlands Energy Centre (PEC) in 2014. The PEC is located along Toronto's harbour-front, and supplies electricity to the city's

downtown. The PEC also houses six large bee colonies under the watch of Hamlin, and this inspired Humber to bring the bees to Seneca because it fit with his belief in growing biodiversity in a world in which it is in decline. Humber's assistant, Andrew Wickman, along with Peggy Pitawanakwat, Coordinator at First Peoples@Seneca, Melissa Fishman, Senior Support Officer at First Peoples@Seneca, and Seneca students Alexandria Bipatnath and I also joined the group on the roof.

But before opening the hives to see the bees, Pitawanakwat led a traditional smudge ceremony, a common form of prayer that many Indigenous practice. Smudging is a prayer that seeks to create positive energy during a challenging time. But it can also be a prayer to give thanks to the Creator. When performing a smudge, the individual's prayers and medicine are sent to the Creator using smoke created when the sage is burned. Sage is one of the four medicines that the First Nations Peoples use for their blessings and prayers. Pitawanakwat began the smudging by thanking everyone who attended and allowing each person to express his or her appreciation and excitement for the gathering. She then led the smudging, with the help of Bipatnath.

Although there were only a few Indigenous people in our group, everyone there had the opportunity to participate in the smudge.

When the smudge ended, Bipatnath performed a beautiful traditional dance on the rooftop, wearing all of her traditional clothing and jewelry. Despite the freezing temperature and snow on the ground, Bipatnath danced away. After, our group followed Forster and Hamlin to check on the bees. They opened each hive and we watched a few bees fly away, but most of the bees simply peeked outside the hive. They then covered them up for the winter, and we headed back inside.

Since this breed of bee is not native to North America, one would not initially recognize a relationship between the bees on Seneca's rooftop and the First Peoples@Seneca community. In fact, there actually is a strong and natural connection between the two. Both Pitawanakwat and Hamlin explained that this was because many Indigenous people recognize Earth as their mother, believing all sustenance comes from her. Therefore, they value the honey bees, who gives us a variety of fruit, vegetables and plants through cross pollination. Moreover, they appreciate that without honey bees, we would have less fruit, vegetables, plants and animals to eat.

Before the honey bees came to Seneca, all prayers and blessings were offered with sage purchased from a local market. Once the bees were settled at Seneca, they were able to pollinate the newly planted sage. This allowed ongoing blessings for the bees to be done using the sage they helped produce through pollination. This also allowed the First Peoples@Seneca to have a ready supply of sage for their individual prayers, rather than depending on trips to the local market. This signifies the power and importance of these honey bees to the First Peoples@Seneca community, because the honey bees give them the opportunity to send their prayers forward to the Creator.

Pitawanakwat is the one on campus who leads the blessings for the bees. This is because she has the traditional knowledge and background to perform these ceremonies and blessings. She always includes and engages students in these ceremonies

in order to eventually pass her knowledge on. Students are also able to perform their own smudge in the First Peoples@Seneca office, where there is always a supply of sage for students to use for their individual prayers, thanks to the honey bees.

Surprisingly, Pitawanakwat did not reach out to Humber or Hamlin to perform a blessing for the bees, but was immediately contacted by them, because they were aware of the practices of the First Nations Peoples, and wanted to include her, and the First Peoples@Seneca community, in welcoming the bees. They value the spiritual element that Pitawanakwat brings to the caring of the bees, and believes that the smoke from the sage works to calm the bees. Both Pitawanakwat and Hamlin believe such practices helped the Seneca bees survive the harsh 2014 winter, when many other bee colonies did not survive.

They also credit the College's support for the success of the bees. For example, Forster was responsible for the current location of the bees on the rooftop of D building. Originally, everyone wanted the bees to be placed on the roof of the B building. However, Forster's input on the lack of sunlight and shelter from the wind helped determine a more suitable position for the bees on building D. Seneca has also contributed to the care of the bees by removing the use of pesticides and fungicides, once used on campus, in order to ensure the bees could flourish in the best environmental conditions possible.

Seneca also purchases from Hamlin the honey that the bees produce here, and uses it as gifts for guest speakers and events. Seneca purchases the candles that Hamlin crafts into symbols that honour the First Nations Peoples culture, such as owls, turtles, flowers and other symbols that have a special meaning to them. Whenever Seneca distributes these gifts to guest



Bees are estimated to pollinate almost a third of the food we eat in Canada, and by way of that process, ensuring the future generations of all kinds of plants, that in turn support other species.

speakers, there is an information sheet included. The sheet explains that the bee colony is located on the roof of Seneca, and thanks Seneca's administration for its support and recognition of the work of the honey bees. It also states that the bees created the unpasteurized honey from the plants and flowers surrounding Seneca's campus. Since Seneca participates in a very natural way to care for the bees, and does not use any chemicals, added ingredients or pesticides on its flowers or honey, the taste of the honey made here has a different taste than a lot of other brands.

On the outside of the information sheet is a picture of Seneca's rooftop apiary, which is very unique in appearance. Rather than painting the hives a solid white, which many beekeepers believe prevents the bees from flying out and being distracted, Seneca's rooftop hives are colourfully painted with images and patterns. Hamlin does not believe the colour distracts the bees from their work, and has taken the opportunity to honour both the bees and Indigenous people by using Indigenous symbols and patterns on the apiary. He believes that because the land was taken from Indigenous people through colonization, the land is traditional territory. Therefore he paints his apiary in colourful imagery and patterns, which are associated with Indigenous people, as his way of honouring their struggles.

Bee keepers have their own individual way of caring for their bees, but Hamlin values the involvement of the First Peoples@Seneca community for the bees he works with. From the day Hamlin first brought the bees to Seneca, he immediately reached out to the First Peoples@Seneca community and has always included them in his subsequent visits to the bees. Thus a strong relationship between the bees on the rooftop and First Peoples@Seneca has formed. The bees have also helped foster a stronger relationship between the various departments at Seneca, from Custodial and Support Services to the Eco-Seneca Initiatives department. It is a collaborative effort at Seneca's campus to care for the bees, and every department recognizes the importance of each other's work, especially the prayers and care from Pitawanakwat and the First Peoples@Seneca.

PORCUPINE QUILLWORK AT SENECA: A LIVING ART

BY ADRIANA BEZERRA DE CARVALHO AIALA



Dorothie Peltier
(Anishinaabe)
Star pattern quill basket
(*Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation*), 2013
Porcupine quills and birchbark

INDIGENOUS ART IN Canada dates back thousands of years. However, most of the artifacts have been lost due to the perishable nature of materials like hide and wood that are used in their crafting. For the same reason, only quillwork from the 19th and 20th centuries has been preserved. Nevertheless, archaeological discoveries of quillworking tools on the Plains dating back to the sixth century C.E. demonstrate that art and craftwork with porcupine quills is one of the most ancient forms of embroidery in North America. The use of the porcupine quill to create intricate decorative designs was widespread among Indigenous peoples that lived in the natural range of the porcupine. Moreover, quillwork is an entirely original Indigenous technique, highly developed, with no counterpart in the world.

While the quillwork method is shared by different Indigenous peoples, each Indigenous nation developed its own distinctive aesthetic expression. This technology is used to decorate surfaces of daily objects such as clothes, moccasins, accessories and utensils, and sacred objects like regalia, pipestems, rattles, whistles and medicine bags. Writer John Friesen explains that traditionally, regardless the purpose of the object, the embroidery had a further aim of being a "spiritual exercise... intended to project the message of the article which was often spiritual in nature." For

instance, a quill box was used to conserve the umbilical cord of the newborn for his/her first year to ensure the wholeness of the infant in case of an early death. In addition, the artifacts were also valuable commodities in the trades between the nations since quillwork was highly appreciated and sought by the bands that did not master the art.

The craft of quillwork is extremely labourious thanks to the difficulty of applying the quills, as well as due to the process involved in collecting and preparing the raw materials. There are several different techniques that vary based on the size of the porcupine quill, the material to which it is attached, and the features and function of the object itself. Each element of the crafting has special meanings and requires specific handling.

The animal hides used to manufacture the artifact contain the spiritual or shamanistic powers of the animals themselves, conveying a symbolic and dynamic meaning. The hide was then decorated with quills by threads, which are made of sinew from animals such as buffalo.

The porcupine quills also preserved the medicinal spiritual power of the animal, since the person who carries its medicine also carries protection against the environment and benefits in health and energy. Although today porcupine quills can be purchased from craft catalogues, they were traditionally collected directly from the animal, which would give 30,000 to 40,000 quills. To remove the quills, the porcupine skin was soaked and the quills carefully plucked, washed and sorted by size. The quills then went through the process of dyeing (or were kept natural) and drying. To dye, the quills were soaked in a variety natural dyes such as plants, berries, barks, minerals, etc. According to Indigenous spirituality, the natural dyes also transmit mystical attributes to the artefact.

Sweetgrass is one of the four sacred plants for Indigenous peoples in Canada. Its pleasant scent lasts for many years and, although bands differ about its meaning, it is believed to possess healing powers. Carefully collected in the middle of the summertime, the sweetgrass is used to finish the birchbark crafts and must be dried in order to be stored.

Birch trees provide a strong and enduring outer sheath. The bark, however must be peeled in beginning of the spring with extreme precision in order to avoid hurting the tree and to preserve its integrity. This versatile material is employed for several uses such as Ojibway canoes and baskets.

The collection exhibited in the First Peoples@Seneca Indigenous art display case comprises a variety of artefacts from distinct artists. The most antique article is the birchbark basket with strawberry pattern and geometric motif created by artist Dorothie Peltier. The piece presents the gentle curvilinear

pattern of strawberries, a deeply symbolic motif. The medicine of strawberries is Reconciliation. All around the base of the box are geometric patterns in white and red. A floral theme appears in two more birchbark baskets, with a red and a purple rosebud, respectively.

Animal patterns are also a theme of the baskets. On two baskets there are artistic compositions representing mythic helpers that are present in the Indigenous stories of creation: the beaver, and the turtle who holds the Earth on its back.

The other four objects in the collection comprise two birchbark baskets and two miniatures representing a canoe and a tipi, all with geometric patterns. The most embroidered of all artefacts in the collection is the final birchbark basket. Entirely covered by porcupine quills, it shows an exquisitely worked star shaped pattern on its top. Despite using only undyed and red quills, the artistic mastery is demonstrated through the effect obtained by taking advantage of the natural darker tip of the porcupine quill.

The unique artistries of the quillwork items, such as Peltier's, are representative articles of the Anishinaabe people of Wikwemikong, the Odawa, Ojibway and Pottawatomi nations that make up the Three Fires Confederacy. These objects illustrate the collaborative efforts of First Peoples with Seneca in maintaining—and expanding—the education about Indigenous cultural heritage.



**Christine McGregor, née
Debassige** (Anishinaabe)
Hummingbird Purse
(*M'Chigeeng First Nation*), 2016
Moose hide and beadwork



L'Assumption Sash (Métis), 1985
Presented to Peggy
Pitawanakwat by Métis Elder
Terry Lister during the canoe
expedition from Edmonton to
Batoche, commemorating the
centennial of the Red River
Rebellion



Medicines (all Nations), 2017
Mashkodewashk, Semaá,
Wiingash, Kizhik (Sage,
Tobacco, Sweet Grass and
Cedar) from the Newnham
campus medicine garden



Seagrass basket
(*Salish*), 1999
West Coast seagrass



Ash basket
(*Haudenosaunee*), 1999
Ontario ash bark



Dorothie Peltier
(Anishinaabe)
Woman's Moccasins
(*Wikwemikong Unceded*
First Nation), 2015
Deer hide, rabbit fur
and beads



Drumsticks
(Anishinaabe), 2005
Leather and wood

CHAPTER 7
THE FUTURE

Wooded hills north of Caledon,
Ontario, traditional home to
Mississauga Nation traditional
territory First Nation



DR. NIIGANWEWIDAM JAMES SINCLAIR



James Sinclair

ON OCTOBER 24, 2016, Seneca was honoured to host Dr. Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair as our keynote speaker for Teaching and Learning: Curriculum Day 2016. Dr. Sinclair's keynote address, "What Does Reconciliation Look Like?" offered insights into the lives and possibilities of Indigenous people in Canada, and shared ideas about how Seneca could further integrate meaningful practices of Reconciliation with Indigenous people within our institution.

Dr. Sinclair spoke further on the topic of "Indigenizing Intellectual Spaces" at two popular workshop sessions the same day. In these sessions, Dr. Sinclair explained that the history, wisdom and practices of Indigenous people are relevant to every discipline, and that the integration of this wealth of knowledge into curriculum is possible for all instructors.

The day began with blessings from Elder Blu and addresses from Seneca President David Agnew, and Vice-President, Academic, Laurel Schollen. Alongside Dr. Sinclair's workshop session, there were sessions facilitated by Kylie Fox and Beedahbin Peltier, Shelly Moore-Frappier, and Dan Shaule. Kylie Fox and Beedahbin Peltier, from Fleming College, explored "Meaningful Ways to Indigenize the Institution." "Infusing Indigenous History Across Disciplines" was the focus of a workshop by Dan Shaule, an historical researcher with OKT Law, and a sessional lecturer at Laurentian University. Shelly Moore-Frappier, Director of the Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre at Laurentian University,

focused on "Forging New Relationships." Peggy Pitawanakwat led an afternoon session of collective blanket-making as one of the College's Reconciliation projects. Seneca then donated the blankets to the Anduhyaun Women's Shelter, which serves Indigenous women in need.

Dr. Sinclair was born in St. Peter's (Little Peguis) Indian Settlement in Manitoba. He is Anishinaabe and the son of The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, who presided over the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. This commission looked into the shameful history of the Indian Residential School system. Dr. Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair holds a Bachelor in Education from the University of Winnipeg, a Masters in Native and African-American literatures from the University of Oklahoma, and a Doctorate in First Nations and American literatures from the University of British Columbia.

He is a regular contributor to print, online and televised media for national and international distributors like CTV, CBC, APTN, Al-Jazeera, The Globe and Mail and The Guardian. He is also the editor of several books, including the award-winning Manitowapow, co-edited with Warren Cariou. Dr. Sinclair is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, as well as a major curriculum writer.

Recommendations Regarding Education from The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Items 62–65 Education for Reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
 - i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
 - ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
 - iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
 - iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.
- iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of Reconciliation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BY MICHAEL MAYNARD

Dean, Faculty of Communication, Art and Design



Peggy Pitawanakwat and Michael Maynard



Gallery owner Jack Pollock, author Selwyn Dewdney and artist Norval Morrisseau at Pollock's Yorkville gallery, 1976.

I'M VERY PROUD of this student project, yet another example of what makes Seneca such a unique and successful post-secondary institution. It's been wonderful to work with a team of dedicated and talented students from so many programs, as well as staff and recent graduates.

This book has special meaning for me because of my own interest in Indigenous art. During my college years I hitch-hiked across Canada, and during my travels I met Selwyn Dewdney, the author who first introduced Indigenous artist Norval Morrisseau to gallery owner Jack Pollock, and through that connection the contemporary world of art. Dewdney and his colleague, a lichenologist from Queen's University, picked me up en route to the Indigenous pictographs at Agawa Bay on Lake Superior, where they were collecting lichen samples to confirm the date they were created (about 200 years ago). Over several days I spent at the site, Selwyn shared much about Indigenous history and culture. Later I used tracings of the pictographs in my graduate thesis, and I was fortunate to meet Morrisseau himself at one of his solo exhibitions at Toronto's Pollock Gallery.

So thank you Peggy Pitawanakwat for your enthusiastic support of the book project, and Professors Shannon Blake and Erin Dolmage for championing the project with your students and helping with final edits. Thanks to Professor David Turnbull and retired Professor Bob Cooper for your work with student writers. And a special thanks to recent Seneca alumni Roberto Vazquez and Lily Nguyen for your excellent work with, respectively, photography and graphic design.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION PROTOCOL FOR COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES

PREPARED BY COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES CANADA

The signatory institutions to this protocol recognize and affirm their responsibility and obligation to Indigenous education. Colleges and institutes respect and recognize that Indigenous people including First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, having distinct cultures, languages, histories and contemporary perspectives.

Indigenous education emanates from the intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Indigenous education will strengthen colleges' and institutes' contribution to improving the lives of learners and communities.

The signatory institution agrees to:

1. Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.
 2. Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.
 3. Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.
 4. Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
 5. Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments, throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.
 6. Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.
 7. Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.
- Signed October 15, 2015 by Seneca President David Agnew and Hon. David Zimmer, Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

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Indigenous Student Representative

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