

**2024 BC RECONCILIATION AWARDEE BACKGROUNDEERS**

**Sdahl K’awaas, Lucy Bell, PhD (ABD)**

Old Massett

Watchmen, Skyáanaa ‘la’áaylang, stand atop Haida poles, watching for visitors and for danger. Lucy Bell, Sdahl K’awaas, has served as a Watchman in the museum world, advocating for reconciliation, repatriation, and anti-racism.

As a founding member of the Haida Repatriation Committee, she has spent nearly 30 years helping return over 500 ancestral remains to Haida Gwaii, guided by Yahgudang (Respect), and reconnecting the Haida with their 12,000 belongings in global museums.

As the inaugural Head of Indigenous Collections and Repatriation at the Royal BC Museum (RBCM), Lucy advanced reconciliation, co-authored the Indigenous Repatriation Handbook, and pushed for systemic change despite facing institutional racism. Her public resignation led to a year-long investigation and significant changes in the museum sector. She received the *Sterling Prize for Controversy* for speaking out against racism. Lucy will soon host a Haida Tla Yahda (Making it right) ceremony with the RBCM for closure, and to receive an apology in a Haida way.

Lucy continues to speak out for reconciliation and justice in the heritage field, advising the BC Museums Association, and the Canadian Museums Association. Her co-authored *From Stealing to Healing Report* on repatriation costs and benefits for First Peoples’ Cultural Council is a first of its kind in Canada.

Lucy is passionate about protecting and supporting her daughter and other upcoming museologists. She co-created a UVic course on decolonizing museums and co-founded Indigenous Museum Cousins. Her forthcoming dissertation will show how the Haida reconcile and work with museums.

**Corporal (Retired) Chris Gosselin, M.O.M.**

West Kelowna

Corporal (Retired) Chris Gosselin, M.O.M., whose traditional name is Makadewaa Makwa (“that comes from the black bear people), is a band member of Tootinaowaziibeeng, a reserve in Manitoba. Chris served over 23 years with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in BC, building strong relationships between Indigenous communities, RCMP and provincial and federal government agencies. In

2010, Chris was recognized nationally with Order of Merit for Police Award in Ottawa by the Governor General of Canada.

Of Ojibwe and Métis descent, Chris became known for his diplomatic approach to improving tripartite policing agreement with Stó:lō communities. His work centered on reconciliation, cultural sensitivity, and ensuring Indigenous voices were respected within the justice system.

Chris championed cultural education within the RCMP, training officers on Indigenous traditions and advocating for tailored policing services. Noticing gaps in Community Tri-Partite Agreements, he helped to establish the Urban Indigenous Liaison position and formed a specialized unit focused on cultural sensitivity. His leadership culminated in the signing of the Community Safety Agreement in 2021, for 14 Indigenous communities without a policing agreement, solidifying the RCMP's commitment to culturally responsive policing. Chris' dedication to fostering trust and mutual respect leaves a lasting legacy in community-focused policing. On October 19, 2022, the Stó:lō Tribal Council communities honoured Chris upon his retirement with being adopted and covered with an ancestral name, Qelets'telts (protector of the people).

**Gloria Morgan**

Enderby

Gloria Morgan, a survivor of St. Eugene's Indian Residential School and the 60s Scoop, exemplifies resilience and leadership in her lifelong commitment to reconciliation. After serving as an RCMP officer for 11 years, she transitioned to law in 1994. Gloria practiced until 2001, when she was elected Chief of the Splatshin First Nation, serving two terms. Her dedication to justice extended to her role as a Federal Adjudicator for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, supporting survivors across the country.

Gloria has contributed to numerous boards, including Tsm7aksaltn Teaching Center and Okanagan College, where she championed Indigenous curriculum development and ensured that Indigenization and Reconciliation worked hand in hand. As an advocate for education and cultural preservation, she has promoted fundraising for Indigenous students and taught Secwepemc Youth Language and Cultural Arts classes. Currently a board member of the Provincial Health Services Authority, Gloria remains a force for reconciliation, bridging cultural divides through her work with the Enderby and District Arts Council and community events.

## **Qwelmínte Secwépemc**

Kamloops

Qwelmínte Secwépemc is a collective of leadership and technical experts from eight Secwépemc communities, working in partnership with four BC government ministries to advance reconciliation and foster shared governance. Formed in 2019 through a Government-to-Government Letter of Commitment (LoC), the partnership enhances Indigenous law and land management capacity, while ensuring Secwépemc people play a central role in regional economic development, and Governance.

In 2022, the Sku7pecen's Journey LoC reinforced this collaboration with multi-year funding, resulting in the Joint Intentions Paper (JIP) that outlines a strategic path forward. Embracing the "Walking on Two Legs" philosophy, the collective integrates both Western and Secwépemc knowledge in governance.

Qwelmínte Secwépemc's work spans forestry, water, wildlife, and energy. Its recent successes include successful co-development of Forest Biodiversity Principles with BC as a precursory step to its Forest Landscape Plan work, and Collaborative Stewardship Forum. The Qwelmínte Secwépemc Office (QSO) staff have also contributed to the drafting and creation of the Together for Wildlife Strategy and advises its implementation. QSO staff and interns' contributions to this work includes co-development of innovative ways for the Province to approach reconciliation at a strategic scale in an inclusive fashion by drafting an approach to non-Statutory Shared Decision-Making and collaborating on a principled approach to reconciliation through a potential wildlife act review. The #TeamSkú7pecen Knowledge Builders Program ensures future generations continue this work by providing interns with hands-on education in reconciliation work, including a Summer Speaker Series that connects interns with Elders, fostering cultural healing, learning, and leadership.

## **Usma Nuuchahnulth Family and Child Services**

### **Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council**

Port Alberni

Usma Nuuchahnulth Family & Child Services (Usma), part of the Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council, is an Indigenous Child and Family Services Agency dedicated to the protection and cultural continuity of Nuuchahnulth children. "Usma," meaning "precious one," reflects the agency's mission to ensure the safety and well-being of children while preserving their cultural identity.

Central to Usma's approach is the Nuu-chah-nulth Haahupa Program, brought to the agency by Elder Geraldine Edgar-Tom, which combines traditional teachings with modern education to support healing and cultural resilience. "Haahupa," meaning "teaching in a loving way," offers initiatives such as the Chaputs Program in collaboration with local School District 70-Pacific Rim, which incorporates traditional food and medicine teachings, and language revitalization. A key element is the "From Residential Schools to Reconciliation" course, educating local service providers about the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools to foster community-wide understanding.

Through its programs, Usma reconnects children with their heritage while building bridges between Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Nuu-chah-nulth communities, advancing reconciliation and cultural preservation.

### **Phyllis Webstad**

Williams Lake

Phyllis Webstad, a Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) author and activist, is a leading voice in raising awareness of the painful legacy of Indian Residential Schools. A member of the Stswecem'c Xgat' First Nation, Phyllis is a founding member of the Orange Shirt Society, dedicated to educating the public about the lasting trauma of these institutions and honouring survivors and their families. Her activism began in 2013 when she shared her own residential school experience, which inspired the creation of Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Phyllis is also a member of the Survivors Circle, supporting fellow survivors and promoting healing. Through her books, *The Orange Shirt Story* and *Every Child Matters*, and the film *Returning Home*, she amplifies the call for reconciliation. Phyllis's advocacy ensures that the history of residential schools is remembered, transforming trauma into education and hope for future generations.