



**Assembly of First Nations
Election for the Office of National Chief
2018**

Candidate Biographies

Perry Bellegarde



Elected National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 2014, Perry Bellegarde brings a wealth of experience drawn from thirty years of First Nations leadership. Originally from Little Black Bear First Nation in Treaty 4 Territory, Perry's strong belief in the laws and traditions instilled in him by the many Chiefs and Elders he has known make him a strong advocate for honouring and implementing Inherent and Treaty rights, title and jurisdiction. The first Treaty Indian to graduate from the University of Regina with a Bachelor of Administration in 1984, Perry also received the Certified Corporate Board Training through The Directors College, founded by The Conference Board of Canada and the DeGroot School of Business at McMaster University.

An oskâpêwis, or helper, Perry uses his life to advance First Nations priorities. He led Little Black Bear First Nation out of third-party management and facilitated Little Black Bear's re-qualification for CMHC housing. At the Touchwood-File Hills-Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Perry worked to restore the original Treaty 4 grounds to reserve status in the town of Fort Qu'Appelle. He managed the transfer of the hospital to First Nations control, which led to the building of a new *All Nations Healing Hospital*. At FSIN he negotiated a twenty-five-year gaming agreement with the Province, stabilizing the Saskatchewan First Nations gaming industry which now employs more than 2,000 people. And as Saskatchewan Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, he worked alongside the National First Nations Veterans Association to spearhead the national compensation package for First Nations Veterans and their spouses.

As National Chief, Perry Bellegarde remains committed to First Nations self-determination, and to the *Closing the Gap* agenda, which has directly influenced the federal government's planning and priorities. *Closing the Gap* has resulted in \$17 billion committed to Indigenous priorities in the last three federal budgets and \$3.3 billion for on-reserve education. Revitalizing our languages and securing long-term funding for First Nations and language champions along with establishing a new fiscal relationship with the Crown remain top priorities. Recognized as a champion of First Nations inclusion, Perry has served on a wide range of boards and been recognized numerous times, most recently with the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. Perry Bellegarde is a catalyst for change with the proven ability to get things done.

See www.perrybellegarde.com for more about Perry Bellegarde's leadership.



Russell Diabo

Russell Diabo, born on December 25th 1955, is a son of a Kahnawake Mohawk Iron Worker, and is a member of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake.

Russell has worked for Indigenous rights for more than 40 years and has served at the AFN as an advisor to two national chiefs. As a writer and editor of the First Nations Strategic Bulletin he has been covering the development of Indigenous policy in Canada for the past 20 years and is recognized as one of the foremost Indigenous policy analysts in the country, while at the same time he has continued to work with the bands at the community level and with Indigenous activists in Defenders of the Land, which he co-founded with Arthur Manuel in 2008.

Russell was present at Wounded Knee during the 1973 stand off when he was 17 years old. He then went on to study Native issues at U.C. Berkeley, Trent University and Laurentian University. He also took graduate courses in American Indian Policy at the University of Arizona with the great Indigenous scholar Vine Deloria Jr..

In 1980, Russell worked at the National Indian Brotherhood in the Parliamentary Liaison Unit and in the mid-1980s, at the AFN's Bilateral Directorate under Neskonlith Chief Bobby Manuel, as a Special Projects Coordinator. He was one of the founding executive members (Vice-President of Policy) of the Aboriginal Peoples' Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada and helped work on the Liberal Aboriginal Platform for the 1993 Federal election. When he saw the betrayal of the platform once the Liberals were elected into office, he decided he would no longer participate in political parties.

Russell was the AFN Indian Act Amendments Coordinator from 1996 to 1997, under the leadership of then National Chief Ovide Mercredi. In 1997, he worked in B.C. as the Research Director for a Traditional Use Study conducted by the Secwepemc communities of Neskonlith and Adams Lake. Following the completion of that project he became Executive Liaison between the Interior Alliance of Indigenous Nations, led by Chief Arthur Manuel, and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, led by Grand Chief Stuart Phillip.

Seizing key recommendations made in the Brundtland Report 1986, Russell became one of the leading voices in environmental protection. In the late 1980s and in the 1990s, he began networking with Indigenous communities from North America and around the world. His assessment of environmental groups at the time was that they needed "Indigenization of their platforms and policies" as many groups had not taken the true Rights and Title Holders into account. Starting in 1987, Russell has been taking Environmental and Indigenous issues to the United Nations in Geneva and New York. His most recent UN trip was in April 2018 to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues with representatives of several nations including Chief Judy Wilson from Neskonlith.

Married for 30 years to Joanna Anaquod from Treaty #4, Saskatchewan, they have 5 children between them. Russell and Joanna are also proud grandparents of six grandchildren.

Sheila North



A member of the Bunibonabee Cree Nation, Grand Chief Sheila North moved to Winnipeg at age 15 to pursue her education. Grand Chief valued the educational opportunities she had and achieved completing two diplomas from Assiniboine Community College in Business Accounting and Rural Development focusing on community development. After completing her diplomas at Assiniboine Community College, she decided to pursue a career in journalism obtaining certification in radio and television broadcasting from the

Academy of Broadcasting Corporation and a Creative Communications diploma from Red River College. Sheila is in the process of completing a degree in Political Science at the University of Winnipeg.

Prior to becoming Grand Chief of MKO, Sheila North worked as a journalist for CBC for seven years, an Entrepreneur, a Cree translator, Economic Development Officer, radio personality, Chief Communication Officer at Assembly for Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), and as a correspondent with CTV News up until being elected as Grand Chief in September 2015.

One of Sheila's passions for a number of years has been working with the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities to raise awareness about the national tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW). Sheila continues to work closely with families, friends and Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders to support advancing action to address the issue of violence against Indigenous women that has resulted in the current crisis. She has successfully been able to engage people to respond to the critical issue of MMIW, including her most recent efforts in a documentary she co-produced with Leonard Yakir "1200+" that highlights some of the systemic issues that place Indigenous women at greater risk for violence and sexual exploitation.

Grand Chief North has also led many other initiatives related to advancing Indigenous issues in Canada. During her time at AMC, Sheila helped to galvanize national and local movements including actions in response to the Crown-First Nations Gatherings that were held in 2012, developing communications strategies to engage both grassroots and Indigenous leadership in Consultation and Accommodation issues with respect to Natural Resource extraction, and a national engagement strategy to respond to the First Nations Education Act proposed by the Federal government in 2014. Grand Chief Sheila North has also worked with Manitoba First Nation political leaders to ensure that Indigenous voices are heard through a sharing of stories to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Grand Chief Sheila North is a gifted writer and listener who brings passion, empathy and commitment to her Leadership. Grand Chief Sheila North is a multiple Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) award winner and Gemini Award nominee. She was most recently recognized in Chatelaine Magazine as one of the top 30 women of

2015 and by media personality Ace Burpee from Virgin Radio as one of the most fascinating 100 Manitobans to watch.

Grand Chief Sheila North has been recognized for her efforts building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities during her time in media and most recently as leader of MKO. She is driven by her passion to create greater awareness among Canadians about Indigenous people, their cultures and shared history in Canada to move towards building relationships in the spirit of achieving true reconciliation.

Sheila is supported by her two children, Trish and Sonny and her immediate and extended family.



Miles Richardson

Miles G. Richardson, O.C., is a citizen of the Haida Nation. After graduating with his Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Victoria in 1979, Mr. Richardson served as Administrator for the Skidegate Band Council and directed the establishment of the Haida Gwaii Watchmen program. In 1984, he was the youngest person to be elected President of the Council of the Haida Nation (CHN), a position he held until 1996. During his tenure as President of the CHN, Mr. Richardson led the drafting of the Constitution of the Haida Nation; development of the comprehensive Haida Nation land and marine use plan, enacted under Haida law; and negotiation of the Gwaii Hanaas

Agreement, the first Nation-to-Nation agreement between the Haida Nation and Canada, which protected the Gwaii Hanaas area of his people's homeland, Haida Gwaii.

Mr. Richardson was a member of the BC Claims Task Force that made recommendations to First Nations in BC and the Governments of Canada and BC on a made-in-BC process to conduct negotiations to build a new relationship. From 1991 through 1993, Mr. Richardson was a delegate of the First Nations Summit Task Group, an executive body representing First Nations in BC. In 1995, he was nominated by the Summit and appointed a Commissioner to the BC Treaty Commission, a position he held for two terms. In 1998, Mr. Richardson was chosen as Chief Commissioner of the BC Treaty Commission by agreement of Canada, BC, and the First Nations Summit, and continued to serve in that role until 2004. In 2007, Mr. Richardson was named an Officer of the Order of Canada.

He is a founding Director of the David Suzuki Foundation, having served on its Board of Directors since its incorporation in 1990. He was also a founding member of the Bill Reid Foundation, which works to preserve the art and perpetuate the legacies of Bill Reid and deepen appreciation of Northwest Coast Indigenous art. From 2010 to 2013, he served as Co-Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Circle for the Institute on Governance and now serves as Senior Advisor for the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, is a member of the Steering Committee for the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative, and is a Director on the Board of the New Relationship Trust.

Currently, Mr. Richardson is the Director of the National Consortium on Indigenous Economic Development, an initiative of the Peter B. Gustavson School of Business and Faculty of Law at the University of Victoria and operates his own strategic advisory firm, building on over three decades of experience providing strategic advice on relationship building, Indigenous governance, community engagement, sustainability, and business development.

Miles Richardson is standing for election as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in the July 25, 2018, National Chief election.

Katherine Whitecloud



Katherine Whitecloud was born into the loving circle of the Mahpiya Ska Tiospaye of the Wipazoka Wakpa Oyate, lovingly guided by her Grandmother, Great Grandmother, Father, Mother and extended family, grounded in her language and teachings. Her greatest passion is to insure that our Sacred Children and our Sacred Elders are loved, honoured and cherished as directed through the teachings of our ancestors and imbedded within our language.

Katherine is an Educator and a Leader, fulfilling roles as a Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Director of Education, Superintendent, Chairman of an Education Board, and Regional Director of Education.

She has been Executive Director for the DOTC, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and the Assembly of First Nations.

As a leader, Katherine was elected to Councillor and Chief for her Oyate and as the AFN Regional Chief for Manitoba. She has been chairperson for many organizations, and many leadership gatherings.

Katherine is an active member of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers roundtable, supporting and sharing the infinite wisdom of our Elders, Knowledge Holders, and Grandmothers, articulating the message of responsibility for the gifts provided to us as distinct Peoples of this beautiful land. During her tenure as Regional Chief, she carried national portfolios directly related to the wellbeing of our People and our Warriors: Education, Languages, Child Welfare, Health/Wellbeing, Social/HR, and FN Veterans.

An effective, responsible, and honourable Assembly of First Nations must contribute to the empowerment of all 634 First Nations across Canada in their pursuit and practice of Nationhood. We are at a critical point in history as Canada seeks to discuss fundamental Nationhood issues of Identity and Citizenship, Lands and Territories, Governance, Language and Indigenous Rights with First Nations. We must define these matters for ourselves based upon our ways which have sustained us since time immemorial in thinking and considering seven generations ahead. Achieving our goals means finding common ground through four leadership pillars, starting with community and generating positive real-life outcomes for the people.

Honour the Foundation of our Nationhood: Original instructions for living guide the way forward. We must bring these ways forward into our daily lives, our governance structures and all that we do. We must assume our Inherent responsibilities and exercise our Inherent Rights that flow from these sacred instructions.

Exercising Nationhood: Community-level solutions and Indigenous led processes determine the way forward. Self-determination, exercising jurisdiction, balanced, inclusive, representative. Our sacred relationship with the land is testament to our Nationhood – We belong to it, we are connected to it, and we are responsible for it. Our health depends on the health of the land. When the water is threatened, our very survival is threatened. The same can be said of our sacred relationship with each other.

Embracing Nationhood: Roles and Responsibilities are fulfilled and life's purpose, our children and youth are nurtured. Everyone in our families, extended families and our Nations have roles and responsibilities. To effectively address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls epidemic, the Child Welfare Crisis, and the Jordan's Principle Human Rights issue, we must take action at every level; individual, family, community, national and international. The future of our Nationhood depends on the protection, safety and development of our children, now and seven generations ahead. They hold a Creator-given right to learn in their ancestral languages and to live and thrive in an environment that nurtures their life's purpose.

Asserting Nationhood: Nation to Nation Dialogue and Indigenous led legal Framework. We honour our Nationhood by living our original Nationhood instructions in decision-making and away from the colonizer's rules. We act with self-determination and exercise our jurisdictions by giving voice to our Citizens and creating space for our own processes; this is Nationhood. All In doing these things we can confidently and forcefully speak, act and insist upon our Nationhood.

With a profound faith in the infinite goodness and love of our Creator and the blessings provided for each day guiding her role as an outspoken advocate, Katherine's message reinforces that our lives are meant to be lived with purpose, with gratitude and with thanks giving.

Mitakuye Owasin.
Katherine Whitecloud