

**VOL 20 | APRIL 2021**

## **NWAC President's Report**

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



### **LORRAINE WHITMAN**

Lorraine Whitman was elected as the President of the Native Women's Association of Canada on September 14, 2019. Prior to her presidency at NWAC, Ms. Whitman served as President of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association and has been advocating for Indigenous women's rights over the past 45 years

## April President's Report

The month of April was full of many exciting events, both virtually and in person. I received my second vaccination shot in early April at the Glooscap First Nation Health Centre. With the global pandemic still on the forefront, it's important for us to take care of our health. It's not just ourselves who are in danger, but our Elder community members. They need us and this is one of the ways we can take care of our community. If you are unsure about the vaccine, talk to your doctor, listen to your health practitioner, listen to updates on the vaccines, and do your research so you can feel comfort in being vaccinated.



April is a new fiscal year for NWAC. All of us worked hard during the months of February and March to prepare for the new 2021-22 year and ensure everything was in order. I look forward to the year ahead, as spring unfolds and we make new decisions once the new budget is finalized. After the federal budget for 2021 was announced in April, I held a conference call with Minister Carolyn Bennett. We wait to see where the dollars will be delegated.

Recently, in my local First Nation community, someone found an eagle on their farmland and connected with me about the eagle and its feathers. I was gifted those eagle feathers and performed a smudging. It's an honour to receive such a gift; I always appreciate going back to my grassroots and using the feathers for beadwork and leatherwork.

This month in my work as an Elder, I was approached to work with the families who had applied for the Sixties Scoop registrations. Many women had received applications and registrations, and I had volunteered to help as my own family had been touched by this tragedy. I received many calls and emails from people asking for my help in filling out applications. Due to the pandemic, there was a backlog of work, but such a worthwhile cause!

Thank you for your support and for all the ways that I know you are working in your own community. Let's stand together and stay strong, whether in our work or in our volunteering.

Wela'lin, Thank you,

  
President Lorraine Whitman  
 [@LWhitman\\_NWAC](https://twitter.com/LWhitman_NWAC)

## My April Agenda

### House of Commons Bill C-15, FPT Meeting

I attended the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. NWAC is the voice of grassroots Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in Canada. When it comes to issues like the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), we have a different perspective to that held by male-led national Indigenous organizations.

Thousands of pages of testimony by the National Inquiry and its Calls for Justice—specifically Section 1.3—demand that government ends the political marginalization of Indigenous women. Our exclusion from this important consultation flies in the face of these demands. Considering the importance of UNDRIP and its implementation in Canada, we are more than disappointed at the lack of consultation. Indigenous women have not been meaningfully consulted. These were the highlights from that meeting.

### Canadian Delegation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

I attended the opening ceremony for the Canadian delegation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. This was a follow-up to the outcome document from the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### House of Commons Committee on the Status of Women (Standing Order 108(2))



I spoke to the committee about the issues facing Indigenous women in remote and rural communities, especially as they relate to social services, public safety, emergency services, infrastructure, the justice system, and emergency shelters.

Although it is true that most First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women in Canada—the grassroots women who are our members—live in urban areas, it is also true that many still reside in communities far away from big cities. Many of these communities have no year-round road access. The struggles of these women are very much in our thoughts. Indigenous women are among the most economically marginalized and service-deprived people in Canada. It is one of the reasons we have been targeted by violence, which the National Inquiry into

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has found to be a genocide. Removing those gaps and creating more equality in the delivery of the services that keep societies functioning and citizens safe must be our goal.

Among the recommendations for enhancing the much-needed services for Indigenous women living in remote communities, I asked that we invest in community-based services and supports that have been chosen by the community rather than for the community. I also asked for an:

- increase in funding for medical transportation to help people who live in remote communities get to medical services and supports
- investment in community-based shelters, supports, and services for women who are experiencing violence
- increase in the number of Indigenous health care providers at all levels
- investment in community-based supports and services for Elders
- investment in cultural and traditional healing practices that are grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, including land-based healing

### **Virtual Breakfast with Bob Rae, Canadian Ambassador to the UN, & Indigenous Representatives**

I and Lynne Groulx, CEO, were invited to a meet-and-greet breakfast at the UN (held virtually). We were invited to join Bob Rae and give an update on NWAC and our goals.

#### **Canadian Ambassador to the UN, Bob Rae**

I attended a virtual meeting on the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People (UNDRIP), which says that Indigenous women get to decide who represents them. The male-led advocacy groups approach many issues from a vastly different perspective than NWAC does. We want to have a good relationship with the Crown, one that acknowledges and affirms our constitutional rights. There are times when we must turn to the international community and the United Nations to demand that those rights be upheld in our own country. We are looking forward to working with the Canadian Ambassador to the UN on this matter.

#### **Media Interviews**

I spoke with Capital Current regarding justice issues within our police system (includes RCMP officers, jurors, and court judges). Justice is denied to Indigenous women in so many ways. I spoke from an Indigenous lens about systemic discrimination experienced by Indigenous women in general and how that looks in the criminal justice system.

I gave a media interview with Tye on various subjects related to Indigenous matters, MMIWG, RCMP, and other areas on a national level, including police searches for the killers of missing and murdered Indigenous women.



I spoke with APTN News about the 2021 federal budget and our expectations and outcomes.

### Teaching and Colouring Virtual Workshop & Stress Busting Workshop

Many grassroots women, girls, and gender-diverse participants joined us for NWAC's various online workshops. NWAC's Resiliency Lodge presented the workshops via zoom and I hosted.



**Lorraine Whitman** @L... · 2021-04-27 ...

The colouring workshop I facilitated yesterday on Zoom was filled with inspiration and creativity. Everyone came away with a beautiful colouring creation and inspired conversation. [@NWAC\\_CA](#) [#indigenous](#) [#inspiration](#) [#creativity](#)



135 views



*Many grassroots women, girls, and gender-diverse participants joined us for our online workshops. NWAC's Resiliency Lodge presented the workshops via Zoom. It was a joy to host!*



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Happy Earth Day! We only have one earth. Take care of it, because it's taking care of us. Without respecting Mother Earth, we can also become extinct. "Msit No'kmaq" "All my relations" [#earthday2021](#)



*Earth Day on April 22<sup>nd</sup>*



Native Women's  
Association of Canada



L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada

[nwac.ca](http://nwac.ca)