

SPACES OF POWER: WOMEN'S STORIES OF RESILIENCE

2017 International Women's Day – Panelist Biographies (alphabetical order)



Dr. Dawn Lavell Harvard, Ph.D.

Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard is a proud member of the Wikwemikong First Nation and former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada. An alumnus of Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Lavell-Harvard has dedicated the academic part of her career to the study of Education, including the experiences of Indigenous women and girls in Canadian secondary and post-secondary school systems.

Dr. Lavell-Harvard's accomplishments include being named a member of the Independent Advisory Board on Senate Appointments, receiving an honorary doctorate of Education by Nipissing University, being Canada's first Indigenous Trudeau scholar, and publishing a number of articles and books discussing Indigenous mothering practices and the effects of colonization and governmental oppression on Indigenous mothers.

Dr. Lavell-Harvard has worked to advance the rights of Indigenous women as the President of the Ontario Native Women's Association and currently works as Director of the First People's House of Learning at Trent University. Dr. Lavell-Harvard is also a full-time mother to three young daughters.



Honourable Dr. Jean Augustine

Honourable Dr. Jean Augustine is an educational administrator, advocate for social justice, and politician. Jean was the first Black-Canadian woman to be elected to the Canadian House of Commons and the first to serve in the Federal Cabinet. Jean is engaged in numerous organizations for education and social justice, serving with the National Black Coalition of Canada, the Board of Governors of York University, the Board of Trustees for The Hospital for Sick Children, the Board of Directors of the Donwood Institute, the Board of Harbourfront, and Chair of the Metro Toronto Housing Authority. Jean was also National President of the Congress of Black Women of Canada.

In December 1995, on a motion by Jean Augustine, Parliament declared the month of February Black History Month in Canada. Among her many honours, Jean holds a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. She is a member of the Order of Canada for her "distinguished career as an educator, politician and advocate for Social Justice in Canada." In 2012, Jean received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and 2014 was made Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). In September 2016, Jean Augustine Secondary School opened its doors in Brampton, Ontario.



Chief Phyllis Williams

Chief Phyllis Williams is the 2nd woman elected Chief of Curve Lake First Nation. She has served this role since June 2012 and had previous experience of being on First Nation Council for 16 years, with portfolios in Health, Social Services, Self-Government, Finance, and Economic Development. Phyllis' studies were in Business Administration.

Her work places have assisted her career growth and have given the great satisfaction of assisting her people with every position she has held. Her career life consisted of working her "way up" over a 12 year span within Whetung Ojibwa Arts and Crafts Centre; then became the 1st Economic & Employment Officer of Curve Lake 8 years; moved on to Trent University Indigenous Studies Native Economic Development Program; then to Union of Ontario Indians, a political organization, first, as Health Advisor and achieved the position of Health Director for 40 First Nations. After 10 years here, she became the Health Manager for Anishinaabe Health in the downtown area of Toronto; and later accepted the role of Assistant Director for the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, staying in the downtown core of Toronto. The OFIFC serves 40 cities throughout Ontario. After 10 years in the urban setting, she returned home to be closer to family and took the duties of Health & Family Services Manager in Curve Lake First Nation but soon after became the Chief where she remains today. *"A full circle of my career life and return to my home community"*, she says.

Highlights in her career were speaking about Traditional Health Practices on invite in Madrid Spain and in recent years speaking to an Economic Development and Indigenous Studies class at Harvard University.

Phyllis could not have accomplished all of this without the endless support and encouragement of her loving partner of 46 yrs. They have 2 daughters, 4 grandchildren, and 2 great grandsons. They have also fostered several nieces and nephews over many years.



Dr. Vanita Lokanathan

Dr. Vanita Lokanathan is a Family Physician with 20 years of experience working coast to coast from Newfoundland and Labrador to Haida Gwaii, BC. She has extensive experience working in rural and First Nations communities. Since moving to Peterborough in 2008, she has included the primary care of trans individuals as part of her practice, and now manages the care of 200+ gender variant people.

Dr. Lokanathan has spoken at the 2014 RHO conference, the 2014 Ontario Family Physician ASA as well as offering CME sessions for primary care providers and specialists on cultural competence and primary care management for trans people. Dr. Lokanathan has recently opened her new family practice on

Charlotte Street where she works alongside 2 Registered Nurses who operate within their full scope of practice. Dr. Lokanathan and her wife Sheena, have two young sons.



Yumna Leghari

Yumna Leghari is a Pakistani-Canadian Trent University alumni who is currently working as co-editor-in-chief at Arthur Newspaper. Her journalistic writing is composed of issues of race, politics, music, and feminist discourse. Yumna also writes and performs poetry and is passionate about representing and advocating for oppressed voices.

Opening remarks and/or performance by Janet McCue & Anne Taylor, Chief Phyllis Williams, MP Maryam Monsef (via video); Councillor Diane Therrien; Karleen Pendleton Jimenez, Ziy von B, The Raging Grannies and more ...

Masters of Ceremony: Faith Mwesigye (KWIC) & Lisa Clarke (KSAC)