

MHR *Connections*

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Manitoba proclaims Treaties Day

Provincial representatives welcomed First Nations Chiefs, the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to the Manitoba Legislative Chamber to recognize the significance of Treaties.

Gifts were exchanged with a beaded table runner and mace pillow presented to the Chamber. A proclamation declaring May 12 as Treaties Day was then signed by Premier Greg Selinger.

“This proclamation acknowledges the importance of the Treaties to all Manitobans,” said Premier Selinger adding, “Understanding the Treaty relationship between First Nations and the Crown is fundamental to living in Manitoba.”

“The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba envisions that Treaties Day will help to revitalize and enhance the Treaty relationship,” said Treaty Commissioner Dennis White Bird. He also said that when Treaties were entered into between First Nations and the Crown they became fundamental building blocks to the rights currently held by First Nations and Manitobans.

During the event, the late Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Oscar Lathlin was honoured with a posthumous Treaty Advocacy Award. “The late Minister Oscar Lathlin laboured hard to strengthen the Treaty relationship; it is our honour to recognize him for his life-long commitment to building a better future for all Treaty Manitobans,” said Commissioner White Bird.

One of the many Manitoba Chiefs attending the event was Grand Chief Ron Evans of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. “First Nation peoples in Manitoba have had a long history of Treaty-making. Treaties were made between various Nations for peace, friendship, non-interference and sharing of lands and resources,” he said.

As part of the events for Treaties Day at the Manitoba legislative assembly, a sunrise ceremony was conducted in the morning on the legislative grounds, Treaty displays were showcased and a Treaty play was performed for visitors after the ceremonies in the Legislative Chamber.



Many Manitoba Chiefs came to the Manitoba Legislature to honour and raise awareness of Treaties and their importance in the creation of Canada and Manitoba.

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The Rights Connection
by Jerry Woods - Chairperson

Women have the right to nurse in public

Recently a young woman and the media brought an important issue to the public’s attention. It seems some people are not aware of the human rights protections for breastfeeding mothers.

I am amazed that we still have to deal with this issue and I am concerned about the lack of information the public has regarding the rights of nursing women.

For the record, the right to breastfeed falls squarely within Manitoba’s human rights legislation. In Manitoba, women are protected from discrimination and harassment because of sex, including pregnancy, the possibility of pregnancy or circumstances related to pregnancy. This includes breastfeeding. Women and children would also be protected under the family status provisions of *The Code*.

This is not new, nor groundbreaking. In a Manitoba human rights decision over ten years ago, it was established that women have the right to nurse in public. To make it clear, it is discriminatory to ask a nursing mother to stop, to move to another place, or to be more discreet.

The Commission’s recently published Guidelines on Parents and Pregnant Women clearly states these protections. “It is contrary to *The Code* to discriminate, without reasonable cause, against a nursing mother because she is breastfeeding her child in a public area. While service providers may provide a quiet, comfortable area for the use of nursing mothers, nursing mothers who are told to move to another place without reasonable cause may file a human rights complaint.”

For service providers, when a patron is “offended” by a woman breastfeeding, it is better to deal with that person and not the nursing mother. Being “offended” by a mother who is breastfeeding is an archaic view, reflecting an attitude that is inconsistent with human rights laws and decisions.

To nursing mothers, you have rights. You have the right to breastfeed a child in a public area. No one should prevent you from doing so. No one should ask you to be more discreet. No one should ask you to move to another place, without reasonable cause. These are not only your rights; they are also the rights of your child.

Did you know that...

Treaty 1 was made in August 1871 at Lower Fort Garry. The member First Nations are: the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Long Plain First Nation, Peguis First Nation, Roseau River Anishinaabe Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation and Swan Lake First Nations.



A Treaty is a formal agreement between two parties. The numbered Treaties, which cover all of Manitoba, are formal agreements that created a relationship between the Crown and First Nations. As a result, each party has certain expectations and obligations, both explicit and implicit.

Treaties cover the land mass of modern-day Manitoba. The Treaties were negotiated and signed by Treaty Commissioners on behalf of the Crown. First Nation peoples chose spokespeople to represent them during the Treaty negotiations.

According to the 2006 Canada Census, Manitoba's population was estimated at 1,177,765. The combined First Nations, Métis and Inuit population in this province was identified as 179,682 with 90,340 self-identifying as First Nations. The most recent information from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada shows there are 134,391 people who are registered as members of First Nations in Manitoba. The figures show that Manitoba has one of the highest numbers of First Nations people in Canada.

First students in new degree program celebrated



Students listen to the many guests and dignitaries at the inauguration ceremony.

In front of honoured guests and dignitaries, the first class of students who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Human Rights and Global Studies, embarked on the first steps of this unique degree. This interdisciplinary degree at the University of Winnipeg Global College is the first of its kind to be offered in Western Canada.

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor

General of Canada and founder of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship congratulated the students and admitted that Canadians "have to recognize that we were not perfect from the start and we have work to do to heal wounds."

Jerry Woods, Chairperson of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission says he was honoured to take part in the inauguration of the first year of the new BA.

"First Nations people have a history of welcoming and I would like to welcome all of you here today. As present and future proponents of human rights, this is a time for you to

reflect on the past, consider the present and anticipate the future," he said.

Mr. Woods also directly addressed the students saying they were now on a path which follows the celebrations and struggles of human rights.

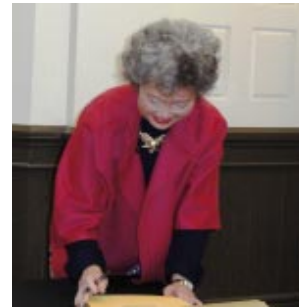


Mr. Woods who is a proud member of the Bear Clan from the Couchiching First Nation and whose spirit name is Ish Ka Dae Mukwa, which is Fire Bear in Ojibway gave opening remarks.

"Recognize past failures and strive to correct them. Embrace today's successes and find strength in them. Look to the future and how you can influence the evolution of human rights that will benefit generations to come. For the cause of human rights and the protection of mother earth, you are our champions, our warriors, our future leaders.

The morning began with a flag procession led by the Manitoba Aboriginal School of Dance and the singing of "Oh Canada" by the student choir of College Pierre Elliot Trudeau.

Also encouraging the students were The Honourable Steven Fletcher, Minister for Democratic Reform, Canada,



Madame Clarkson admires the Global College's beautiful register. The cover was made of tanned elk hide with a painted cloth appliquéd design. The interior pages were tinted with wheat paste and acrylic paint.

The Honourable Flor Marcelino, Minister for Culture Heritage and Tourism, Manitoba, Dr. Neil Besner, Vice-President (Students and International) University of Winnipeg and Debra Radi, Chair, Board of Regents, University of Manitoba. The event was hosted by Marilou McPhedran, Principal of Global College.

At the end of the ceremony guests and students were asked to sign the Global College Register. This register was designed and hand made by Prairie book artist Martha Cole.

For more information on the Bachelor of Human Rights and Global Studies Degree please visit

<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/gc-academic>

Canadian Multiculturalism Day

To celebrate and promote Manitoba's rich cultural landscape, the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties is organizing a Multiculturalism Day event on Saturday June 26, 2010 at the centre court in Portage Place Shopping Centre.

From 12 to 4pm Manitobans will have the opportunity to experience a multitude of cultures through music, dance, cultural displays and activities. The event is free and is open to the public.