

My “Truth” in Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of Canada

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Canada

Abstract

I am a professional Home Economist (PHEc) under the Manitoba Act (1990). In this paper I reflect on an approach to uncover my personal contribution (my “truth”) to colonisation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. I examine my family life, education and career as a professional Home Economist. First Nation (people identified as Indian under the Indian Act) and Métis authors have guided my learning on the impact of colonisation. Historical references related to the practice of Home Economics within the provincial department of agriculture are used to clarify the colonising focus on which my career was based. The intention is to discover a pathway for myself and my profession to learn and acknowledge our colonising impact on Indigenous Peoples. This process is offered to other Home Economists who are exploring ways to decolonise Home Economics and build a respectful, relevant service with Indigenous Peoples.

KEYWORDS: RECONCILIATION, DECOLONISATION, HOME ECONOMICS, HOME ECONOMIST, INDIGENOUS

Introduction

Over the last decade, I have been reading, learning and questioning my own understanding of First Nation and Métis history. Indigenous authors offer stories of their truth in serious, heart rendering non-fiction as well as in entertaining and meaningful fiction. All have aided in my enlightenment and contributed to my social conversations with family, friends and colleagues. I recommend these authors to anyone open to learning truths that we may never have imagined. Such authors include but are not limited to Thomas King (2017), Jean Teillet (2019), Richard Wagamese (2012), Drew Hayden Taylor (2021), Monique Gray Smith (2018), Jody Wilson-Raybould (2021) and Bob Joseph (2018).

Recently, I started cleaning out items saved over the decades of my life. This included many of my essays completed in fulfillment of my Bachelor of Home Economics, University of Manitoba 1973-1976. These essays and exam papers offer real-at-the-time research documents useful in this pathway of self-study. I sought information and guidance from Indigenous authors in my education and understanding of the impact of settler society on Canada’s original inhabitants. One of the first services provided by the provincial government in the early 1900s was agriculture and soon after Home Economics programs were offered in Manitoba. Both Agriculture and Home Economics have recorded histories which I examined for details, attitudes and reflections on service to Indigenous Peoples over decades of time. By studying my own career as a provincial civil servant, I pay attention to my role in the ongoing system of colonisation.

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The call by the International Journal of Home Economics on the topic of “Decolonising Home Economics” offers me an opportunity in which to organise new knowledge, thoughts and research on the topic from a uniquely Canadian perspective. This paper also provides a means in which to contextualise and understand what the Truth and Reconciliation Report (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015) means for an individual Canadian and a profession.

Parameters and Definitions

In this self-study, I grew to understand that the first step in decolonisation is personal—one must search within one’s self to find their “truth” before moving towards reconciliation or decolonisation. The premise for this self-reflection comes from the (former) Governor General of Canada, Michaëlle Jean who wrote a dedication for Bob Joseph’s (2018) book, *21 Things you may not know about the Indian Act*; “When the present does not recognize the wrongs of the past, the future takes its revenge. For that reason, we must never, never turn away from the opportunity of confronting history together—the opportunity to right a historical wrong” (n.p.). The *Indian Act* is the handbook of Canadian colonisation. Thus, in this paper, the term *truth* is a recognition of the past wrongs to Indigenous Peoples to which I or my profession have contributed.

For purposes of clarity, Joseph (2018) provides definitions of terms used to describe Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In Canada the use of the term *Indian* is used in the context of Canada’s *Indian Act* and will continue in use for as long as that *Act* exists. *First Nation* came into use in the 1970s as a replacement for the term *Indian Band*. *First Nations* can mean many communities or for Indian people in general. The term *Indigenous Peoples* is used commonly now, replacing the term *Aboriginal Peoples*, and includes First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples. Indigenous Peoples is the descriptor term most utilised in this paper.

Jean Teillet’s (2019) historical text about the Métis Nation explains the term Métis as used today as, “a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry and who is accepted by the Métis Nation” (p. 478). The use of the term Métis replaces all former labels given by settler society such as “half-breed”, “mixed-bloods”, and “Bois-Brûlés” (Teillet, 2019).

The terms *settler* or *settler society* or *coloniser* refers to peoples who came to Canada post-Euro-Christian contact with Indigenous Peoples. The term *decolonisation* was “once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, but is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (Smith, 2013, p. 78).

In Canada, the TRC

... spent six years travelling to all parts of Canada to hear from the Aboriginal people who had been taken from their families as children, forcibly if necessary, and placed for much of their childhoods in residential schools ... the Commission’s focus on truth determination was intended to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation. (2015, p. v)

The Commission provides *94 Calls to Action* needed in Canada’s reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

“Truth” in My Early Family Life

Raised in a White, middle class settler family, I had little interaction with Indigenous People living in my community and attending my schools. My friends were, and continue to be, mostly non-Indigenous. The few friendships with Indigenous youth were short-lived. This is the case even during the time that my mother was employed at the Portage Indian Residential School in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Despite her Euro-Christian ancestry, I believe she tried hard to understand and assist many young Indigenous students from Northern Manitoba. She attempted to learn the Cree language and engaged with female students in crafts such as beading and moccasin making.

As a family, we billeted some girls and boys in our home while they attended local public high schools. My “truth” is that, despite this opportunity to learn about and engage with Indigenous youth, I did very little. I have fond memories of girls who lived with us, but never sought out any enduring friendships with Indigenous youth. Thankfully the minimal understanding gained through this family experience helped limit an outright racism. Recently, I shared my memories and stories with family members about my experience with the residential school system. My new insights lead me to returning my mother’s photos and memorabilia to Long Plain First Nation, one of the communities impacted by that particular residential school.

“Truth” in My Formal Education

After rereading my university papers, I see pervasive misrepresentation and disregard of Indigenous Peoples. I found many examples but include only one that shows systemic racism imbedded in my thinking and learning. The paper completed for a course on women’s history was entitled “Social Morality in Early Manitoba” (author). During a brief sketch of Manitoba’s early history (late 1800s and early 1900s) there was no mention of First Nation or Métis peoples. As a student, I sought only sources that described the settler, coloniser society point of view. Part of my “truth” is that my settler education comprised almost no learning about Indigenous Peoples’ history. But worse than ignorance, I read my own racist words. In a section of this paper describing the high incidence of prostitution in Winnipeg, I included this statement “The acceptance of saleable sex was aided by the well-established practice of Indian men selling their wives and daughters for pennies” (author). Using this racist statement in my essay shows more than simple ignorance. It illustrates that, despite what I thought, systemic racism was part of my life and education.

Journey of Learning

In my journey to better understand Canada’s history of colonisation, I quote mainly from three Indigenous authors despite the many excellent sources available:

- Joseph, Bob (2018). *21 Things you may not know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians make reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a reality*. Indigenous Relations Press
- Teillet, Jean (2019). *The North-West is our Mother: The story of Louis Riel’s people, The Metis Nation*. Harper Collins
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

Each of these resources was meaningful, relevant and helped trigger my desire to seek the meaning of truth and reconciliation for myself as an individual and as a professional Home Economist. From these references, I learned from Indigenous authors about Canada’s *Indian Act*, Canada’s treatment of Métis People and Canada’s history of Indian Residential Schools.

The Indian Act was enacted in 1876 and remains in effect to present day. Initially, the stated intention was paternalistic, the principle being that Indigenous Peoples were to be taught like children to prepare them for “higher civilisation”. “But that paternalistic attitude gave way to increasingly punitive rules, prohibitions, and regulations that dehumanized Indians” (Joseph, 2018, p. 8). Of note, “it was not until 1960 that the right to vote was extended, unconditionally, to all Indigenous Peoples” (Joseph, 2018, p. 82). This happened within my lifetime. The wrongs against Indigenous Peoples are not ancient history.

Of the 21 points that Joseph makes about the *Indian Act*, this section of my paper focuses on the degradation of Indigenous women and the disruption of family and community. Joseph explains that prior to European contact, women were central to the family. “They were revered in the communities that identified as matriarchal societies, had roles within community government and spiritual ceremonies, and were generally respected for their sacred gifts bestowed upon them by the Creator” (2018, p. 20). This attitude towards Indigenous women changes dramatically as a result of the fundamental disruption by colonisation to the traditional lifestyle of Indigenous communities.

The imposition of the elected chief and band council system (1869 to present day) displaced traditional political structures and did not reflect, consider, or honour Indigenous needs and values. Under the *Indian Act* “the goal of an elected band council was to undermine traditional governance and augment assimilation” (Joseph, 2018, p. 19). Joseph describes how elections every two years causes divisiveness amongst communities and families and constantly challenges the traditional belief that rights are held collectively. Short run interests overrule traditional long run cultural orientations.

Some of the early actions that lead to the degradation of Indigenous women began with how the *Indian Act* controlled and denied Indigenous woman’s rights. The *Indian Act* (1869-1985) denied Indian status to women and their children, who married non-status men (Joseph, 2018). Numerous changes related to Indigenous women’s status were made to the *Act* over time. However, not until 1985 was the *Indian Act* amended “to remove discrimination against women, to be consistent with Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*” (Joseph, 2018, p. 21).

The creation of reserves enacted in 1876 and continues to present day caused irreparable damage to Indigenous family and community. “A reserve is a tract of land set aside under the *Indian Act* and Treaty Agreements for the exclusive use of an Indian band” (Joseph, 2018, p. 24). Joseph writes that “In reality, reserves were created as a means of containing and controlling Indians while providing European settlers full access to the fish and game, water, timber, and mineral resources that had formerly sustained Indian life and culture” (2018, p. 24). Over time, the *Indian Act* legally allowed reserve land to be expropriated by any private group or government wanting it (Joseph, 2018).

Métis People did not fare well within colonisation either. Jean Teillet’s historical documentation of the history of the Métis Nation describes numerous actions taken against Métis people. The company controlling western Canada prior to Canada’s involvement was the Hudson’s Bay Company (Teillet, 2019). Then Lord Selkirk was granted control of some land in the Red River region. The Council of Assiniboia, an object of the Hudson Bay Company, consistently ruled against Métis claims for rights and land ownership. Once Canada purchased the North West from Great Britain, it instituted the survey and sale of land to newcomers. All attempts by Métis families who settled and often cultivated the land, to have their ownership legally recognised were thwarted (Teillet, 2019).

“Truth” in Agricultural Development

“Agriculture was one objective chosen as the path for Indians to follow to become ‘civilized’” (Joseph, 2018, p. 37). According to western theories of civilisation, agriculture was the

development stage just before industrialisation. However, there are numerous examples where reserve lands were taken from Indigenous People, largely because the land that was negotiated by Treaty was desired by settler farmers. One such Manitoba example is the dispossession of the Peguis First Nations (formerly known as the St. Peter's Indian Settlement). Indigenous Peoples, lived, farmed and undertook commerce on Treaty 1 lands situated north of Winnipeg, Manitoba. They were known as "agricultural pioneers in their own right ... a vibrant, highly educated and prosperous people" (Burrows, 2009, pp. 13-14). In the efforts to convince members to surrender their lands, agricultural inducements were offered, "freedom to sell their produce and other goods on the market without Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) interference" (Burrows, 2009, p. 4). Despite numerous efforts to prevent their forced removal, settler encroachment was "the driving force behind the destruction of the reserve and removal of its people" (Burrows, 2009, p. 2).

On the other hand, many reserves were located in areas unsuitable for agriculture. "Government agencies later used the low success rate of some Indian farmers as reason to reduce the size of reserves" (Joseph, 2018, p. 37). When Indian farmers were successful in crops, cattle and produce and were in a position to compete with settlers on a commercial basis, the government responded to settler complaints. Through the *Indian Act*, government instituted permit systems where Indian farmers required a permit to leave the reserve and to sell farm products. Indian farmers required approval from the Indian agent to purchase farm machinery. In addition, settlers were prohibited from purchasing goods and services from Indian farmers. The permit system sections of the Act were not repealed until 2014 (Joseph, 2018).

When I compare the province's agriculture policies and programs, I see parallels to actions taken against Indigenous Peoples. The department of agriculture published its history entitled "The Ministry of Agriculture in Manitoba from 1870-1970." In its prelude, the author references historical documents in describing agriculture practices pre-European contact. All references come from non-Indigenous writers. The prelude offers only brief reference to food production practices undertaken by Indigenous peoples (referred to as natives), Métis peoples (referred to as mixed bloods) and fur trading companies with the express purpose of supplying food for the fur trade industry. It seemed important for the author to dispute the fact that agriculture caused the disappearance of the buffalo.

It is apparent therefore that it was not the introduction of agriculture that drove the buffalo from the Manitoba prairies, but the disappearance of buffalo herds from the native grasslands which caused a biological vacuum in the prairies and made the introduction of subsistence agriculture an imperative. (Government of Manitoba, 1971, p. 14)

As do all Euro-centric documents, the department of agriculture's history is predicated on ownership of the land being in the hands of others. There is no recognition that lands were taken from First Nations, and later Métis, inhabitants. The development of government agricultural services was built upon the premise, that the Government of Canada wanted land to pass to "actual settlers" and not into the hands of the Métis (Teillet, 2019) or First Nations (Joseph, 2018). In fact, the department of agriculture benefited from an expropriation of Treaty Lands when the Riding Mountain National Park was created. Early in the history of agricultural extension work, semi-annual meetings were held in a summer camp "where the type of accommodation is steadily increasing" (Manitoba Agricultural Representatives Association [MARA], 1974, p. 49) in and around the national park.

One of the few stories related to Indigenous Peoples was written in Manitoba Agricultural Representatives Association's history of extension staff about a widespread drought in 1958-59. Municipal and departmental staffs were on the search for hay supplies to feed farm cattle in The Pas, Swan River and Roblin areas. Civil servants with the Lands Branch offered up hay meadows in the Pasquia area. As the story was told (MARA, 1974), I interpret this to be another

example of Indigenous lands being offered up for use by settler society without their consent or benefit. A story from 1946 taken from the same reference demonstrates systemic racism by adopting the name of Pow-Wow for large social occasions. “The origin of the name (Pow-Wow) is not clear but the name itself proved quite appropriate, - particularly for one held in Gimli when the behaviour of some of the more ‘spirited’ members verged on boisterous” (MARA, 1074, pp 48-49). It is ironic that at the time of the cultural appropriation of the term ‘pow-wow’, the *Indian Act* prohibited Indigenous Peoples from practicing their cultural ceremonies such as the sacred Sun Dance ritual of First Nations people on the prairies (Joseph, 2018).

It is not surprising Home Economics services and programs ignored Indigenous audiences. It is not surprising that Indigenous women, families and communities did not seek programs or services from the department of agriculture or Home Economists.

“Truth” in My Profession and Career

The practice of Home Economics was established early in Manitoba’s systematic colonisation of Western Canada. In 1910 a diploma course for young women was developed within the newly established College of Agriculture. “In 1916 a degree course, Bachelor of Home Economics was established for young women” (Burwell et al., 2011, p. 1). The audiences served at this time were objects of the provincial government such as Agricultural Societies, Women’s Institutes, 4-H youth clubs and farm and rural women, all of which are members of settler society. When Home Economics services expanded into the City of Winnipeg and Northern Manitoba, I believe some clients were Indigenous. But our impact on people living on Indian Reserves and Indigenous-only communities was limited. Largely, the targeted audiences, comprised mainly of non-Indigenous peoples, did not change over the decades of programming up until and including my career with the department. This is the case despite the mission, vision and purpose of the field of practice of home economics.

The Manitoba Association of Home Economists is governed by *The Professional Home Economists Act*, passed in 1990, which recognises the right of qualified members to use the Professional Home Economist (PHEC) designation. This registered status provides for self-regulation via an established code of conduct. Prior to 1990 Home Economists organised themselves under a similar banner with similar aims and purposes. Under MAHE’s Constitution and Bylaws the profession of Home Economics is described as: service to individuals, families and communities to actively promote improved quality of life and to study social issues with the focus and expertise of Home Economics and thus make recommendations for action when appropriate. To highlight one of the stated codes of conduct:

The home economist must discharge her duties to clients, employers, employees, members of the public and associates in the profession with integrity. Integrity comprises soundness of moral principle, especially in relation to truth and fair dealing, uprightness, honesty and sincerity. (Manitoba Association of Home Economists [MAHE], n.d.-b, n.p.)

The code continues in directing members to “work towards the betterment of society by encouraging public respect for, and by trying to improve the quality of life of the individual, the family and the community” (MAHE, n.d.-a, n.p.). Our existence and code of conduct clearly directs our profession as one that could/should be of service to Manitoba’s Indigenous Peoples.

As a professional Home Economist, I worked with the Province of Manitoba for 37 years (1976-2014). Most of this time was with the department of agriculture (with its varying departmental names). As a District Home Economist, I recall only three events at which I delivered program information to Indigenous People. Audience members were respectful and courteous. But I now realise how disrespectful I had been in not being properly prepared. I delivered information,

developed by non-Indigenous people, with none of us having understanding of the needs and wants of my audience.

Knowing the needs and wants of your audience is one of the primary theories of Extension, the theoretical method underpinning our departmental practices. "Your credibility and/or that of your extension organization can be at stake if programs are developed that do not meet the needs of people" (Baker, 1984, p. 57). Baker explains there are opportunities for educators who are external to the community, "there is opportunity for you to check out your own perceptions of needs and priorities from a position which should be free from biases" (1984, p. 57). He continues to point out that "potential conflict and resistance can be avoided and involving people in needs identification can help increase motivation, participation and commitment as well as determining apparent apathy" (1984, p. 57). My "truth" is that I had not felt it necessary to explore my Indigenous audience's needs prior to delivering my programs, despite my stated support of the Extension approach to learning and teaching. Further, I now realise that my settler approach was very likely a deterrent to Indigenous peoples from seeking Home Economics services and programming.

In 2002-2003, I was privileged to work on a special project, *Northern Food Prices Project: Exploring strategies to reduce the high cost of food in Northern Manitoba* (Government of Manitoba, 2003). For a short period of time, I had the opportunity to work closely with many Indigenous People. In many ways, my approach was respectful. Under the guidance of Indigenous staff with the department of aboriginal and northern affairs, I listened and learned a lot. The Report reflects what I and other working committee members heard and learned. Generally, the Report's 14 recommendations for action were not popular with government. Perhaps this indicated the working committee which researched and wrote the report was on the right track. Just as in much of Manitoba's history, attending to issues of concern to Indigenous and Northern people has often been done so reluctantly.

As a Home Economist, our goal is to support and strengthen women, families and communities. As an employee with the department of agriculture, our target audience was identified as "rural" and sometimes "Northern" women, families and communities. My "truth" is that I ignored an important segment of women, families and community during my career. I remember sometimes the argument of "jurisdictional responsibilities" (whether or not Province employees had a responsibility to Indigenous Peoples) was used to negate my responsibility to these groups. But it was not an acceptable argument as Indigenous women and families lived within my service area.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Call to Action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC, 2015) is a major source of learning and guidance for settler society people.

The Commission heard from more than 6,000 witnesses, most of whom survived the experience of living in the schools (Indian Residential Schools) as students. The stories of that experience are sometimes difficult to accept as something that could have happened in a country such as Canada, which has long prided itself on being a bastion of democracy, peace, and kindness throughout the world. Children were abused, physically and sexually, and they died in the schools in numbers that would not have been tolerated in any school system anywhere in the country, or in the world. (TRC, 2015, p. v-vi)

However, the Commission clearly states that "shaming and pointing out wrongdoing were not the purpose of the Commission's mandate. Ultimately, the Commission's focus on truth determination was intended to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation" (TRC, 2015, p. vi).

Joseph concisely summarises the Commission's *94 Calls to Action* (2018). For the purposes of this paper, there are a number of Calls to Action to which I and my profession can respond to directly as they relate to our field of practice. Some of these include: developing culturally appropriate parenting programs (#5); developing and delivering culturally appropriate curricula (#10); developing and delivering appropriate early childhood educational programs (#12); include Aboriginal language rights and education on residential schools, Treaties, and contributions in Canadian history in classrooms, public programs and post-secondary education (#14, #62, #16); and contributing to eliminating gaps in health concerns between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples (#19).

Calls to Action that I believe are directed specifically to the profession of Home Economics are:

- 63. *We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:*
 - iii. *Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.*
- 23. *We call upon all levels of government to:*
 - i. *Increase the number of Aboriginal professionals working in the healthcare field.*
- 66. *We call upon the federal government to ... [utilise] funding for community-based youth organisations to deliver programs on reconciliation, and establish a national network to share information and best practices.*
- 93. *We call upon the federal government ... [to work with] newcomers ... to reflect a more inclusive history of diverse Aboriginal people of Canada, including information about Treaties and the history of residential schools.*

(TRC, 2015, n.p.)

Much good work has begun, as evidenced by many Home Economists and academics. I include my personal mentor as an excellent example: as Professional Home Economist, Dr Marlene Atleo, a member of Ahousaht First Nation, holds the position of Senior Scholar with University of Manitoba and continues to instruct at universities in British Columbia (Atleo, 2014). Atleo brings truth in her instruction in aboriginal and cross-cultural adult education courses. But we all need to do more.

Conclusion

In this self-study, I learned the first action one needs to take in decolonisation is to find our own "truth", our contribution to the wrongs forced on First Nations and Métis peoples. This paper is part of this process, making a public statement and describing my initial attempts to find my "truth". I discovered some reprehensible attitudes and actions of my own doing as well as in the historic base of the colonialist government service in which I practiced home economics. I lived and practiced my career within a settler paradigm. For most of my career as a provincial government employee, I was directed away from providing services to Indigenous groups.

Until I as a citizen of Canada and my field of home economics practice undergo a process of finding our "truth", I do not believe we can truly begin the decolonisation of home economics and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. "Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder" (TRC, 2015, p. v). I suspect this will take the rest of my lifetime.

I continue this process of self-reflection with a Personal Pledge (see Figure 1) for action as suggested by Joseph (2018).

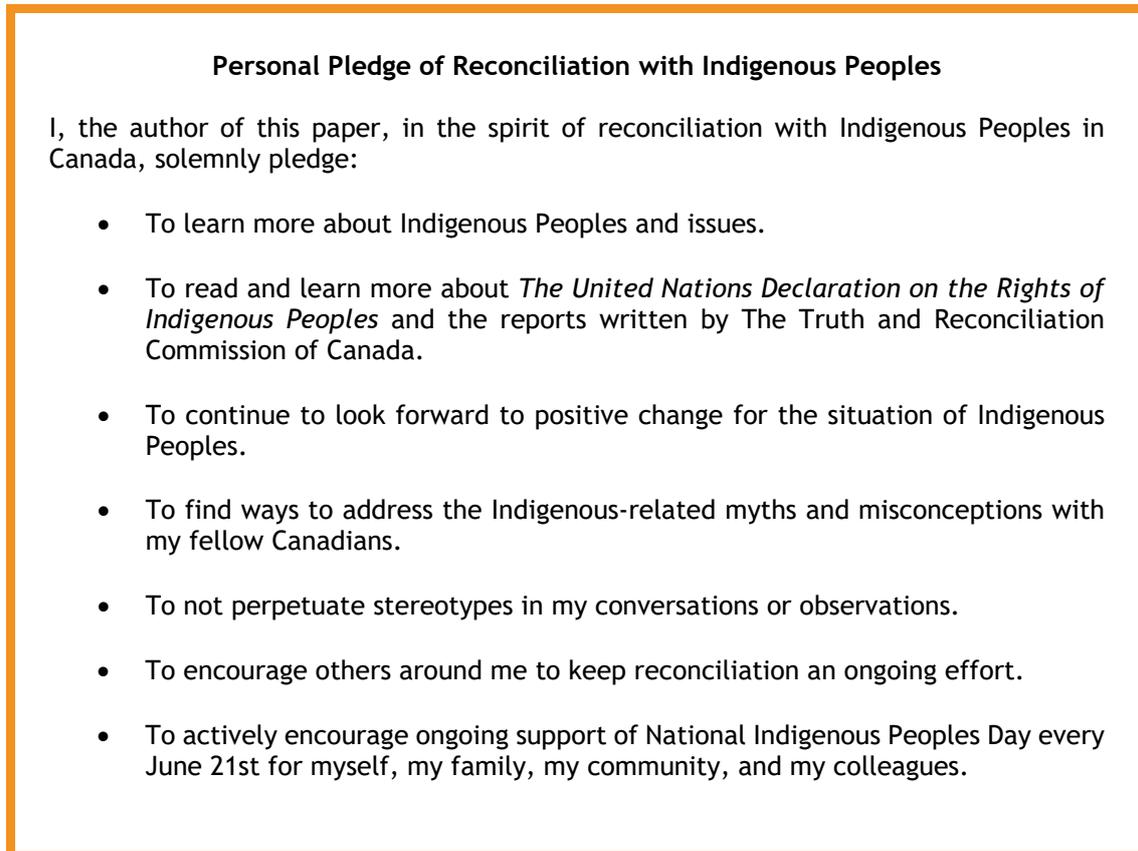


Figure 1 Personal Pledge of Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

By making this Pledge, I hope to become a Responsible Ally with Indigenous Peoples as described by Dr Lynn Gehl. I take to heart all, but in particular her first of 16 actions demonstrated by responsible allies: I will not act out of guilt, but rather “out of genuine interest in challenging the larger oppressive power structures” (Gehl, n.d.)

I realise that continuing on my journey of personal development as a responsible ally does not negate the value and importance of our Home Economics education, mission, codes of practice and work. But I and my fellow Home Economist colleagues might improve our service to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples by following the guiding principle, *Etuaptmumk*, taught by Mi’kmaw Elder Albert Marshall (Institute for Integrative Science and Health, n.d.). *Etuaptmumk* is a Mi’kmaw word for “two-eyed seeing”, that is “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing” (Institute for Integrative Science and Health, n.d.).

Two-eyed seeing adamantly, respectfully, and passionately asks that we bring together our different ways of knowing to motivate people, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to use all our understandings so we can leave the world a better place and not compromise the opportunities for our youth (in the sense of *Seven Generations*) through our own inactions (Institute for Integrative Science and Health, n.d.).

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Biography

Debora Durnin-Richards

Debora Durnin-Richards is a Member of Manitoba Association of Home Economists, having held numerous executive positions. She is proud of the profession, its commitment to a Code of Conduct and legislation requirements. Previous to retirement from the provincial department of agriculture, Durnin-Richards practiced home economics within a number of roles from community service to management and covering a vast array of work, district delivery and management of home economics programs, 4-H Youth, policy, marketing, northern food prices and strategic planning. Durnin-Richards is a member of Manitoba Women's Institute, SERVAS Canada and Manitoba Association of Parliamentarians. Education includes a Bachelor of Home Economics and Master of Education.

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