

June 21st is National Aboriginal Day, a day recognizing and celebrating the cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada.

As Canada celebrates its 150th birthday, it is even more important this year for all Canadians to think about Aboriginal Peoples and their place in our Nation. Many Canadians only seem to consider Aboriginal People when there is conflict, a social issue or a land dispute and these situations are rarely considered from the Aboriginal point of view. We cannot be the country we aspire to be without the success of our First Peoples.

We need to recognize Canada's Aboriginal People as they truly are at the core of our national fabric. To help that happen, National Aboriginal Day is a perfect time to put away biases and explore the truth about Canada's First Peoples and to continue the reconciliation with them that is needed for our country to move forward. Aboriginal inclusion and success is in the best interest of all Canadians and is everyone's responsibility to make that happen.

I encourage everyone, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, to join me in making Canada even better by promoting the success and inclusion of Aboriginal People.

Like many complex issues, the reality at hand requires everyone to consider all points of view. With this in mind, my reading recommendations this year are focused on helping you view some issues from the Aboriginal perspective. Both of these authors provide great insight into the lives of everyday Aboriginal Canadians and their families. Whether through a fictional story or an unconventional text book on Aboriginal issues, both books provide eye-opening insight into issues embedded in many Aboriginal People and their relationship with Canada.

This year's recommended readings include:

- ***Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues in Canada*** ; by Chelsea Vowel - Chelsea initiates conversations about the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. An advocate for Indigenous worldviews, the author discusses the fundamental issues as well as the terminology of relationships, culture and identity, myth-busting, state violence, land, law and treaties along with wider social beliefs about these issues. She answers the questions that many people have on these topics to spark further conversations.
- ***Indian Horse***; by Richard Wagamese - This is a novel by the award-winning author and journalist, an Ojibway from the Wabaseemoong First Nation in northwestern Ontario, whose work was deeply influenced by Indigenous experiences in Canada's residential school system. Richard died in March of 2017. The story is of Saul Indian Horse tucked away in a hospice high above the clash and clang of a big city, as he embarks on a marvelous journey of imagination back through the life he led as a northern Ojibway.

All the best to you and your families on June 21st, National Aboriginal Day, an important day for all Canadians.

See my prior year's messages @ <https://www.fnbc.ca/AboutUs/MediaCentre/MessagesFromCEO/>