

Speaker talks reconciliation

BY LISA BECKWICK

DIVERSITY Thunder Bay is proud to present the Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould, who will be the keynote speaker for Diversity Thunder Bay's 16th annual celebration for the elimination of racial discrimination. Wilson-Raybould is a national best-selling author, Canada's first Indigenous minister of justice and attorney general, the first elected female Independent member of Parliament, and former B.C. Regional Chief. She has been a leader among Indigenous peoples advocating for the proper recognition and implementation of Indigenous rights.

Diversity Thunder Bay is a community-based organization whose mission is to work towards an equitable community, free of racism and discrimination of any kind. Every year, Diversity Thunder Bay honours the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, held on March 21, by inviting distinguished speakers to help initiate crucial conversations in our community.

In the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, 69 unarmed and peaceful demonstrators were killed by South African police as they protested the country's unjust apartheid laws. Since proclaiming the day in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. Racist laws and practices have been abolished in many countries but, despite much progress, racism continues to exist and to affect the lives of individuals and ethnic and religious groups worldwide.

Wilson-Raybould is a lawyer, advocate, and leader among British Columbia's First Nations. She is a descendant of the Musgamagw Tsawataineuk and Laich-Kwil-Tach peoples, which are part of the Kwakwaka'wakw and known as the Kwak'waka-speaking peoples. She is a member of the We Wai Kai Nation with her traditional name, Puglaas, meaning "woman born to noble people."



ONE CITY,
MANY VOICES

The Thunder Bay's Anti-Racism and Respect Committee and Diversity Thunder Bay produce this monthly column to promote greater understanding of race relations in Northwestern Ontario.

Wilson-Raybould share experiences with audience in Thunder Bay

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Inspired by her grandmother, who persevered throughout her life to keep alive the governing traditions of her people, and raised as the daughter of a hereditary chief and Indigenous leader, Wilson-Raybould always knew she was destined for leadership roles and responsibilities.

In 2021, Wilson-Raybould re-



Jody Wilson-Raybould will be the keynote speaker on March 23 for Diversity Thunder Bay's celebration for the elimination of racial discrimination.

leased her most recent book, *The 'Indian' In The Cabinet*, which became a number one national best-seller and was a finalist for the Writers' Trust Balsillie Prize for Public Policy. In the book, she shares her experience as an Indigenous leader sitting around the cabinet table of the federal government, her proudest achievements, the very public SNC-Lavalin affair, and how she got out and moved forward.

Now, sitting as an Independent member in Parliament, Wilson-Raybould believes there is a better way to govern and a better way for politics — one that will make a better country for all.

In this exclusive talk on "Taking Steps to Advance True Reconciliation," Wilson-Raybould will discuss a variety of topics related to this important public policy issue, including why governments struggle to advance true reconciliation, UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), racial justice for Indigenous peoples and addressing our legacy of colonialism, challenges that we may face as a community and as individuals, and creating safe spaces to have these important conversations. Her presentation will be followed by a brief question period.

Please join us on Wednesday, March 23 from 12 noon to 1:15 pm for the Hon. Wilson-Raybould's enlightening presentation on diversity and inclusion and what we can do as a community to advance true reconciliation. Diversity Thunder Bay, in collaboration with many generous sponsors, is offering this presentation in a virtual format, free of charge. To reserve your ticket, go to diversitythunderbay.ca or @DiversityThunderBay on Facebook.

Lisa Beckwick is the director of organizational and people development for St. Joseph's Care Group, is co-chair for the Celebration, and has been a member of Diversity Thunder Bay since 2005. The views and opinions expressed in this column are those of the author.