



**Assembly of First Nations
Election for National Chief
December 6, 2023**

**National Chief
Candidate Biographies**

Reginald Bellerose



After dedicating 17 years to his role as Chief of Muskowekwan First Nation, and 16 years to Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA), Reginald Bellerose is proud to put his name forward for National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

While he is committed to addressing a wide range of matters, his platform is focused on building in areas of 7 Generations of Wealth, Nation-to-Nation relations, Moving Issues Forward, and Community Wellness. Reg's vision of good governance is leadership that creates positive impacts for First Nation people, whether in areas of health and wellness, economic self-determination, environmental sovereignty, or climate change.

Throughout his career, Reg Bellerose has proved his commitment to economic self-determination. During his 8 years as chair of SIGA the organization generated \$583 million in net income, which has positively impacted the 74 First Nation communities in Saskatchewan. During his 16 years with SIGA, as a Board member, the Corporation has accumulated a net income of over \$1.2 Billion. In addition to this, Reg was an integral part of a collective lobbying effort advocating for full First Nations' jurisdiction over on-Reserve gaming. Bill S-268, introduced in the Senate of Canada in June 2023, is a result of this collective effort. Along the way, his political work and accomplishments have been recognized through the ceremonial transferring of 3 headdresses.

During his time as Chief of Muskowekwan, Reg prioritized promoting property rights and attracting investment into the community. His leadership has created the political stability to secure a viable pathway towards economic self-determination by modernizing the Nation's land status. Youth have always inspired and motivated his leadership, his goal is to ensure children are proud of the world passed down to them.

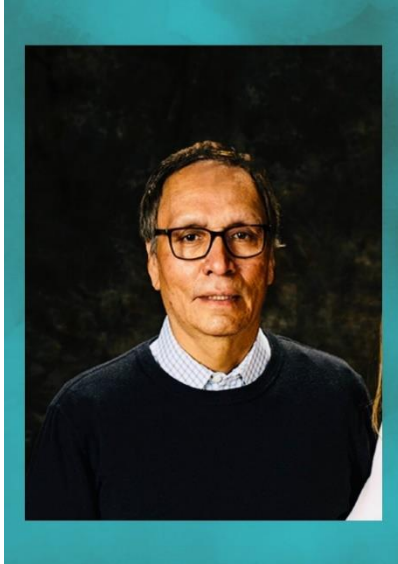
Reg believes that First Nations should be supported to determine their own healing and well-being because the existing colonial health system has consistently failed to do so. This includes working with First Nation health and wellness professionals, knowledge holders, and communities to develop our own effective approaches for care.

Some achievements in his advocacy efforts encompass accomplishments in areas of gaming, education, residential school healing supports, mineral rights, justice reform, child welfare, and the labor market. Reginald has sponsored significant resolutions at the AFN, including Bill C-92, Resolution 15, Justice Reform in the name Colton Boushie, Tina Fontaine, and others. Reg commits to a better future by working together and supporting Chiefs resolutions, including the Final Report on Resolution 13/2020 (Ending Sexual Orientation & Gender-Based Discrimination in AFN) and the Climate Change Strategy.

Reg Bellerose has served on numerous boards including the Saskatchewan Indian Training Assessment Group, Saskatchewan Health Authority, and CarbonRX. He earned a Master's Certificate in Project Management from the University of Saskatchewan and a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from Concordia University. Further, Reg combines his academic education with the wisdom and knowledge gained from working with Chiefs, Elders, and youth.

Starting December 6th, 2023, Reg Bellerose is ready to use his 17 years of experience to assist the Chiefs of Canada in navigating the complex political landscape on issues that matter most to them. For further information on Reginald Bellerose's platform and further links to his social media visit www.bellerose2023.com

Craig Makinaw



Born and raised in the heart of Treaty 6 Territory, Craig Makinaw's leadership is deeply rooted in his commitment to his community and family. With his wife Delorna and their nine children, Craig's life epitomizes the traditional values of kinship, respect, and responsibility. He is also blessed with thirteen grandchildren and three great grandchildren. This grounds him in the real-world impact of leadership and decision making that encompasses family and communal values which Indigenous people share throughout North America.

Craig's political journey is marked by a series of influential roles: AFN Alberta regional Chief, 19 years on the Erminskin Council, six years as Chief of Ermineskin Cree Nation, Grand Chief of the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, and six months as the MCTC Executive Director. His tenure as Chief is notably marked by his successful efforts in repatriating the Neyaskweyak Trust Fund, enhancing the Nations autonomy in managing its resources and driving the establishment of the Neyaskweyak Group of Companies. These strides in economic development reflect Craig's unwavering commitment to the prosperity of First Nations.

His advocacy extends beyond economic development. As a steadfast champion of Treaty and Indigenous rights, Craig has addressed vital issues at national and international forums including presentations to the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and the United Nations. His efforts focus on health, education, infrastructure, and crucial social issues like housing, wellness, and the involvement of elders and youth in community planning. These endeavours are a testament to his holistic approach to leadership.

In his most recent role on the Council for Erminskin, Craig has been pivotal in revitalizing his community post-COVID-19, updating laws, enhancing transparency through regular meetings with community members and tackling critical issues like housing and economic development. His vision extends to enhancing wellness programs and ensuring inclusivity and support for off-reserve members.

In closing, Craig has demonstrated leadership in a way that includes advisors from all areas of the socio-economic structures we have been bound to since the exposure to external settler cultures. He has been successful in navigating these systems with the help of his teachers and elders with whom he involves in every area of his life. It is Craig's goal to unify and collaborate with the many Chiefs of the nations on this land now referred to as Canada. He wishes to humbly and respectfully lead in a way that is inclusive and thoughtful of all Treaty and non-Treaty nations on our great lands.

Shelia North (Wikahsko Iskwew)



GRAND CHIEF SHEILA NORTH, Wikahsko Iskwew, is a Cree Leader, Politician, Policy Advocate, Activist, Journalist, and Author, of the Bunibonibee Cree Nation in the Treaty 5 Territory who formerly served as the Grand Chief of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, MKO. She was elected in 2015 as the first woman to hold the position.

Grand Chief Sheila North is a Lifelong Activist for the Inherent, Treaty, Title and Human Rights of First Nations Peoples. Chief North knows that our National Organization was created by our Ancestors to Honor Our Sovereign Nations, Elevate, and Implement our Rights.

With North's leadership and part of Grand Chief North's Action Plan, MKO contributed to the completion of a Landmark Economic Impact Study measuring Indigenous contributions of approximately \$9.3B to Manitoba's Economy and GDP in one year. She advocated along side many Survivors, Families, Leaders and Allies to see the

National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls become a reality and continues to advocate for the implementation of the "231 Calls To Justice" released in the final report of the Inquiry. She commissioned a curriculum on MMIW with support from the Canadian Women Foundation and created the commonly used hashtag, #MMIW, in 2012 to ensure the issue remains in the public consciousness and that it is always viewed as a Human Rights Priority in Canada.

North is the Director at the International Commission on Missing Persons [ICMP] overseeing Missing Children, Residential Schools, and Engagement. Fighting to defend the dignity of our people she is tasked with achieving Accountability, Justice and Restitution for Missing Children & Unmarked Graves internationally and in Canada. North continues leading the Engagement and Political Strategy for Unmarked Graves and Missing Children from the former Indian Residential School (IRS) sites.

North is an Indigenous Voice in Media & Award Winning Journalist who co-produced a documentary with Leonard Yakir, entitled 1200+, highlighting the systemic issues that place Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirited people at greater risk for violence and sexual exploitation. And increasingly, the issue also impacts Men and Boys, which is why Sheila uses the hashtag, #MMIR, to acknowledge all Relatives that are still missing/murdered and impacted by the national tragedy.

North will initiate her International contacts to frame the discussion and strategies to uphold and to implement Inherent and Treaty Rights, and will use her journalism expertise to broaden the Rights discussion in the country.

The Strength of Our Nations comes from our Rights.

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David Pratt



David Gordon Pratt is a proud citizen of Muscowpetung First Nation located in Treaty 4 Territory. He is serving his second term as the First Vice Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) where he was elected to lead the 74 First Nations in the Saskatchewan region with an exceptional mandate of over 70% of the vote.

David's father was William H. Pratt Sr. of Muscowpetung First Nation. He was a well-respected World War II veteran who served on the Council of his nation for over 30 years. His mother, Marion Isabel Pratt from the Cote First Nation, was also an elected leader. Both were Residential School survivors that instilled the values of respect and hard work into David and his 14 siblings and most of all, to speak up for others who may not have a voice.

David is a visionary leader with a proven track record of making a difference and advancing the Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations. Under his leadership in 2022, the FSIN established the first-ever First Nations Health Ombudsperson as a response to the discrimination and mistreatment that First Nations peoples face within the healthcare system.

David was a fierce advocate for Bill C-92: An Act Respecting First Nations Children and Families, legislation that recognizes the Inherent rights of Indigenous peoples. He worked closely with past and present leaders, the AFN Advisory Council, and Cindy Blackstock to ensure that no children were left out of the final settlement agreement in 2023. David's leadership work supported the Caring Society to ensure that all First Nations children who experienced discrimination on-reserve would receive compensation despite the efforts of his opposition.

David is currently the Co-Chair of the AFN National Table on Health alongside Glen O'Hare, the Regional Chief of Ontario. Here, David has been wholeheartedly committed to supporting the recognition of the Inherent right to self-govern over healthcare and the implementation of the Treaty right to health.

In closing, David Pratt's unwavering commitment to the mandates entrusted to him by the Chiefs in Assembly reflects his dedication to the betterment of First Nations communities. His track record of effective leadership speaks volumes about his capability to initiate meaningful change. Embracing the wisdom of the collective, David is poised to further unite our diverse nations under the AFN banner, paving the way for a harmonious and powerful shared voice. Together, as many nations with a unified voice, we can stride confidently towards a brighter, more equitable future, where the recognition of our inherent rights takes center stage.

For more information on David's leadership, visit www.davidprattafn.org

Dean Sayers



Dean Sayers, a member of the Crane Clan linked explicitly to the blue heron in the central Great Lakes region, served as Chief of Batchewana First Nation for nearly two decades. His journey as a leader is driven by an unwavering commitment to the progress and well-being of the original Peoples of these lands.

Throughout his tenure, Dean dedicated his time and efforts towards advancing the interests of Indigenous communities and fiercely advocating for their rights. He firmly believes that the creation of the Assembly of First

Nations (AFN) marked a significant milestone, formed as a voice and advocate for the collective interests of Indigenous peoples.

Dean's decision to run for National Chief was influenced by his interactions with Elders, knowledge keepers, and his deep belief in ceremony. He is guided by the vision of our ancestors, which encompasses a holistic approach focusing on preserving our language, our lands, and our people. While asserting our original laws, with a primary focus on action-based protection of inherent jurisdiction.

In the role of National Chief, Dean will be deeply committed to revitalizing the core elements of Nationhood within Indigenous communities, ensuring they become pillars of strength once more. Dean's leadership style seeks to empower Indigenous communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast to enhance community governance systems and compel settler governments to honour their promises and commitments made through treaty, agreements, and acknowledgement of inherent jurisdictions. He will be assertive yet fair, encouraging First Nations leadership across the country to reclaim jurisdictional areas not surrendered in any treaties or agreements.

Dean's remarkable career includes highlights such as serving as one of the lead negotiators for the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 annuities litigation, which resulted in a groundbreaking \$10 billion settlement. Dean was a strong advocate during the Ontario First Nations' fight against the proposed HST tax. As Chief, he was a steady participant in regional leadership spaces such as the AFN, where he has contributed his experience and insights to the broader Indigenous community.

Dean recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work for the diverse lands of Indigenous peoples. It is time to reclaim their rightful place as the first order of government on these lands. While the journey ahead may include many challenges to overcome, it is a path that must be charted. With the right ingredients in place, the First Nation collective can achieve the progress everyone aspires to see, and Dean wants to be the catalyst for that change, working collaboratively with Indigenous communities.

Dean is both humbled and incredibly proud to be engaged in this very important journey, where he aims to champion the work on behalf of Indigenous communities and the betterment of their collective future.

More information about Dean Sayers can be found at: www.deansayers.com

Cindy Woodhouse



Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse was born and raised in the Anishinaabe community of Pinaymootang First Nation, located in Treaty 2 territory, Manitoba. Her Great-Great Grand Father, Chief Richard Woodhouse was an original signatory of Treaty 2 on August 21, 1871.

Cindy's dad, Chief Garnet Woodhouse, has worked for First Nations as a Chief and Councillor for over four decades. Cindy's mother received a Master's Degree in Education and has served First Nation students for over 35 years.

Cindy's parents started taking Cindy to national meetings at a young age where she learned about the rights First Nations leaders were fighting for. This legacy of leadership, her education and cultural upbringing instilled strong values in Cindy for the protection of First Nations inherent and Treaty rights, and cultural way of life.

Cindy graduated and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Winnipeg. She has also completed Harvard University's 'Leading People and Investing to Build Sustainable Communities' program and the Harvard Business 'Tribal Leaders' program.

Cindy started her career as an advisor to Manitoba Chief Francis Flett and other First Nation leaders, including Assembly of First Nation National Chiefs Perry Bellegarde and Shawn Atleo. In her entire career, Cindy have never worked for any other government except First Nations.

As Regional Chief, Cindy led negotiations for the AFN that resulted in an historic \$40+ billion settlement of a human rights class action respecting discrimination in the child welfare system. During her term as Regional Chief, Cindy has also:

- led on advocacy for clean drinking water, universal internet connectivity and closing the infrastructure and housing gap for all First Nations
- regularly highlighted emerging issues for Chiefs in her region such as developments respecting implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, policing and emergency services
- worked with First Nations leadership to protect collective rights – Treaty, inherent rights, title and jurisdiction, the right to self-determination and all human rights.

Throughout her career, Cindy has accumulated a wealth of experience working to lobby the Senate, House of Commons, Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister's Office to fulfill mandates from Chiefs. For more information: www.cindywoodhouse.ca.

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