

Message from the President

To the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, chapter members, staff, Indigenous and Two-Spirit people of Mi'kma'ki; I am a firm believer in accountability and transparency, as well as, the benefits of hard work and "pushing the envelope". It has been an honour to work for you, by carrying each of your voices, advocating your ideas, hopes and dreams. It was a beautiful Fall day, October 6, 2019, the sun was shining so bright that day and honestly, it feels like it has not stopped since becoming elected as the president for the NSNWA. Over the past six months we have made substantial progress collaborating with the provincial and federal governments and various agencies, to meet the needs of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA in Nova Scotia.

Throughout my administration we have had frequent Executive Committee meetings, reaching out to our numerous partners and working diligently to not only further the goals of the NSNWA, but to advocate for Indigenous women and girls. One Executive Committee meeting stands out, which was held on the one-year anniversary of Cassidy Bernard's death, after our meeting, everyone stayed for the evening standing in solidarity with my family and the community of We'koqma'q as we honoured the life of my beautiful cousin lost way too soon. I remember vividly how we stood on the side of the highway for 4365 seconds, 4000 seconds for the estimated Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada and 365 seconds for every day we have waited for answers regarding Cassidy. In that moment I realized that this is where I am supposed to be; here with my sisters advocating for all Indigenous women in Mi'kma'ki – being a voice for justice, compassion and equality.

I have been invited to attend numerous speaking events on behalf of the NSNWA, the most memorable was at a gathering for families of the MMIWG in Eskasoni. I wrote a speech but decided at the last minute to speak from the heart, advocating for our stolen sisters and their families. Another speaking engagement was at the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, honouring the women senselessly murdered at the Ecole Polytechnique Massacre. I was also invited to address the UN on the tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls – this event was cancelled but Chief Leroy was able to deliver this speech on my behalf in Ottawa.

Another highlight of this journey so far, was being asked to represent NWAC and NSNWA at a Forced and Coerced Sterilization Symposium. It was an emotional two days, our NSNWA Secretary, Karina Matthews-Denny attended as well. Much of her work with Senator Christmas has revolved around this subject and her introduction of Senator Boyer to NSNWA has been pivotal in NSNWA's movement to aiding our women in recognizing forced and coerced sterilization within their own communities.

I have done my absolute best in representing all of you and the NSNWA. I will remain on this journey laid out before me and will continue to represent the NSNWA in the best capacity that I can. I want to acknowledge our staff who work on the front lines every day. You are all advocates for the better good for our Indigenous women. You are carrying a sense of pride in our organization that is felt throughout the province. I am proud of every single one of you.

Annie Daisley
President, Nova Scotia Native Women's Association