

Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Board of Directors Reports Progress on \$30 Million National Fundraising Commitment

OTTAWA, July 18, 2022 – The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the Fund is officially accepting proposals and distributing funds for projects in support of healing and reconciliation. Projects are determined locally in consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, and the first proposal received approval on July 15, 2022.

The Fund has already collected \$4.6 million from Catholic dioceses across the country, as part of a nationwide commitment to raise \$30 million over the next five years. Project proposals from Diocesan / Regional Reconciliation Committees are being presented to the Fund, as part of an effort to support and encourage local collaboration between Catholic entities and Indigenous partners. All applications for funding must first be submitted through local Diocesan / Regional Reconciliation Committees.

“The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is a critically important effort in support of the path of healing and reconciliation between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples,” said Chief Wilton Littlechild, Chair of Board. “We are pleased with the progress made to date, and are looking forward to distributing funds as quickly as possible in support of reconciliation projects across the country”.

The Fund has been designed to meet the highest standards of transparency and good governance and is overseen by a Board of Directors made up of Indigenous leaders across Canada. The most recent addition to the Board is the Honourable Graydon Nicholas, CM, ONB, LL.D, who has a lengthy history of working for justice for First Nations and other people.

Mr. Nicholas was the first Indigenous person in Atlantic Canada to earn a law degree and has served as counsel on many important cases involving the rights of Indigenous people. He was the first Indigenous judge in New Brunswick, where he served on the provincial Court from 1991-2009. He served as Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick from 2009 to 2014, also a first for an Indigenous person. Presently, he is the Chancellor of St. Thomas University, where he is also the Endowed Chair of Native Studies.

“As the former Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, lawyer, judge and Indigenous leader, Mr. Nicholas brings a wealth of expertise and perspective to the important work of the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund,” said Bishop William McGrattan, Vice-President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “It is our sincere hope that that the governance and oversight offered by all the accomplished and highly respected Indigenous Directors who have agreed to serve on the Board, will help the fund to meaningfully advance healing between the Catholic Church and Indigenous Peoples.”

Other Board Directors whose positions have been previously announced include:

- **Chief Wilton Littlechild**, a Cree chief, residential school survivor, and lawyer who served as a Commissioner for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Chief Littlechild has been elected Chair of the Board.
- **Giselle Marion**, who holds a law degree from the University of British Columbia and works as the Director of Client Services with the Tłı̨chǫ Government in Northwest Territories.

- **Rosella Kinoshameg**, an Odawa/Ojibway woman and residential school survivor from the Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation Territory, with over 50 years of nursing experience, mostly working with First Nations communities on community health care. She has an honorary doctorate in Sacred Letters from Regis College at the University of Toronto.

On September 30, 2021, the Canadian Bishops [announced](#) a \$30 million national financial pledge to support healing and reconciliation initiatives. In keeping with that commitment, the Fund will accept donations raised from 73 dioceses across Canada, while publishing annual reports and cooperating with an audit by an independent accounting firm each year.

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About the Indigenous Reconciliation Fund

The Indigenous Reconciliation Fund is a Canadian registered charity established in 2022 to support and advance healing and reconciliation initiatives. The Charity accepts contributions from 73 Catholic dioceses across Canada in order to fulfill a \$30 million financial commitment made by Canada's Bishops.

About the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) is the national assembly of the Bishops of Canada. It was founded in 1943 and officially recognized by the Holy See in 1948.

For further information, email communications@cccb.ca.