

Circles of Light

October 2001 – Number 16

Next Exit Pictures

Stefany Mathias Creates Films That Inspire

by Ruth McVeigh

Stefany Mathias, a hereditary chief of the Squamish Nation, is using her many talents — and the medium of Aboriginal television — to celebrate successful First Nations professionals. Mathias recently incorporated her own production company, **Next Exit Pictures**, to present human interest and documentary videos dedicated to this goal.

“I’d like to show that we are doctors, lawyers and writers,” she emphasizes.

One of Mathias’s first documentaries was a biography of the late Chief **Simon Baker**, a highly respected Elder of the Squamish Nation, for Vancouver Television’s *First Story* series. Then **Brenda Chambers**, a producer with the Aboriginal Peoples’ Television Network (APTN) invited Mathias to produce two segments of *Venturing Forth*, the series on Aboriginal businesses that airs Sunday afternoons on APTN. Among the First Nations entrepreneurs Mathias profiled was Winnipeg-based Ojibway businessperson **Elaine Cowan**, founder of the Anokiiwin Training Institute.

Mathias’s interest in film and theatre arts began in childhood when her mother took her to plays and concerts, and her father took her to movies. “This gave me an early appreciation for the arts, and a strong desire to create stories to move people through film or theatre,” she explains.



Photo: Krisalina Jacobs

Stefany Mathias’s Next Exit Pictures showcases positive role models: “I’d like to show the world that we are doctors, lawyers and writers,” she says.

That early inspiration eventually led Mathias to the University of British Columbia where she got her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in acting. She also

attended workshops on directing, writing and producing, and later took courses at the Vancouver Film School on filmmaking, editing and acting for film. She worked in front of the camera on the TV series *Hawkeye*, hosted a video documentary, *Journey to Spiritual Healing*, and has done commercials and a music video. Her work in live theatre includes a number of plays in Vancouver and Toronto.

Women Entrepreneurs

They treat the world as their marketplace — and are fuelling economic growth and job creation here at home.

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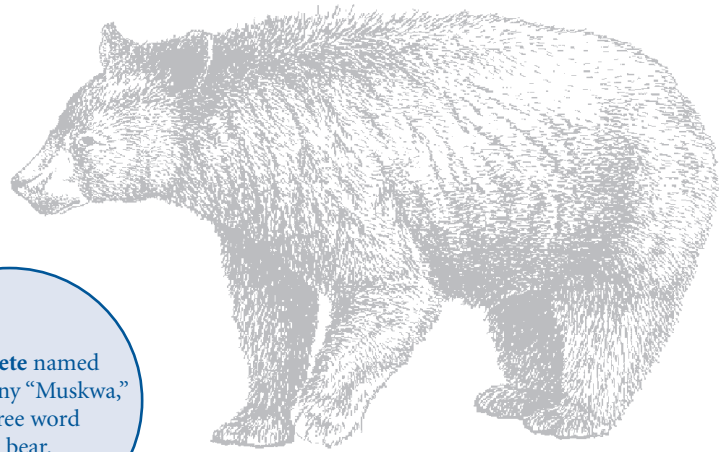
Making and Marketing Aboriginal Graduation Gowns

by Ruth McVeigh

Three First Nations sisters are putting a lot of their energies, talents and expertise into a new business — **Muskwa Designs** — recently started in Saskatchewan. The company makes and markets graduation gowns designed especially for Aboriginal schools, an idea that started with founder **Adele Pete**.

For three years, Pete was administrator of the Chief Little Pine School, located about 80 kilometres southwest of North Battleford. During that time, the community and the Elders were looking for ways to instill pride in the students. Then Pete had a dream that revealed a way traditions could be honoured, and cultural awareness raised — through special graduation gowns incorporating Aboriginal designs. Although she has no specific training in design, Pete has been sewing for a long time and has done a lot of experimenting.

The first gowns made their appearance when one boy and one girl wore the eye-catching creations at a Chief Little Pine School graduation ceremony in 1999. Now the idea is catching on with other schools in Saskatchewan, mostly thanks to the company Web site promoting the concept.



Adele Pete named her company "Muskwa," the Cree word for bear.

Pete's younger sister, **Loretta Pete Hall**, designed the Web site for the new company. It had not been on the Net very long before orders and enquiries started to come in.

Loretta, who has also been involved in the education system for many years, teaching math and computer science, has been a big help to her sister. Her own business, Eagle Feather Data Exchange, provides Web site design as one of its many services. Loretta's expertise in Web design is largely self-taught, reinforced by

courses and workshops she has taken through the years. To help her sister promote her business, she has also linked the Muskwa Designs site to Aboriginal on-line directories like **www.aboriginalconnections.com**. In addition, she faxed information about the graduation gowns to all First Nations communities.

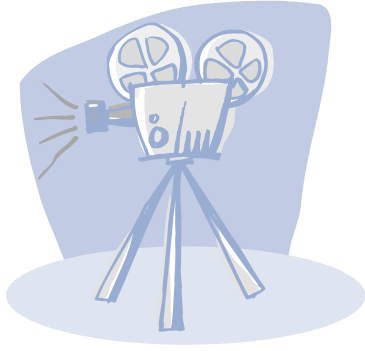
The eldest sister, **Yvonne**, is an expert seamstress who has begun making other clothing using Aboriginal designs. These include ribbon shirts, which are depicted on the site, as are the leather scrolls that can be made for graduates. Muskwa Designs has also begun to produce wedding gowns. One of the graduates was so pleased with her grad gown that she asked Pete to make her wedding dress. This too, featured Aboriginal designs.

Thanks to lots of hard work, this thriving family business is proving to be the answer to Adele Pete's dream of honouring traditions and raising cultural awareness.

For more information, visit the company's Web site at **www.muskwaholdings.com** *

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Mathias has taught acting in Vancouver, and studied directing by shadowing **Chris Eyre**, director of *Smoke Signals*, as he worked on his newest feature film, *Skins*, which will be released in 2002. Mathias plans to use this same mentorship method when she teaches directing.

She has written children's screenplays, such as *Native Legends from the Interior*, and served as cultural advisor to other writers and directors.

Her next major project involves a feature film script she wrote, entitled *Native Land*. Her script spotlights issues of sexual abuse and teen runaways, and shows the value of spiritual healing and reconnecting with one's culture. It was one of 12 scripts selected from a total of 3,000 for the Writers' Lab at the Sundance Film Festival Institute, founded and headed by actor/director/producer **Robert Redford**.

Next Exit Pictures will hold open auditions for young Aboriginal actors and actresses for *Native Land* next year. Mathias hopes to involve Aboriginal youth in all aspects of the production, and will be looking for people to fill trainee positions behind the scenes.

In this, as in all her projects, Mathias wants to create the kind of thought-provoking work that simultaneously intrigues, entertains, inspires and encourages her audience.

For more information, E-mail Next Exit Pictures at nextexitpictures@home.com *

Higgins International Inc. Executive Searches Extraordinaire

by Edwinna von Baeyer

Brenda Higgins and her team are regarded as Canada's experts for Aboriginal executive searches. Her company, Winnipeg-based **Higgins International Inc.**, recently found the people to fill the positions of chief executive officer and chief financial officer for the Assembly of First Nations.

"Gone are the days when you couldn't find highly qualified Aboriginal professionals," Brenda observes. "Today they are found in every field."

A Métis, born in Manitoba, Brenda is proud of the carefully tailored services her three-year-old company provides to each client. In addition to professional and executive searches, Higgins International Inc. helps organizations set up their human resources function, developing job descriptions and creating employee performance appraisal programs. The company provides training on a broad range of business subjects, including writing effective job descriptions and résumés.

A large percentage of Higgins International Inc.'s business relates to Aboriginal organizations and First Nations communities, but the company also works for non-Aboriginal companies. It found the right people to fill positions at the German airline, Lufthansa, and at a South African gaming casino.

The firm has also fostered large client groups in the telecommunications and health care sectors. A recent client is the National Aboriginal Health Organization. Higgins International Inc. is doing the senior executive search, job descriptions and the staffing strategy for this new organization.

"Hard work and doing my homework," is Brenda's own synopsis for her success. Her 15 years' experience

in Human Resources is backed by her natural self-reliance and enthusiasm for taking on new challenges.

Brenda left home at age 15, and worked her way through high school and university. Whenever possible, she took on-the-job management training, and learned as much as she could from her peers and colleagues. Her mentors' help and encouragement provided Brenda with much-needed support when she decided to establish her own company. She talked with about 45 people as part of her research, asking what they liked about the human resources business, what courses she needed, and whether they saw any trends developing for the industry's future. Obviously, this strategy worked.

These days, Brenda does a lot of mentoring herself. "You have to give back to the community," she emphasizes. She also encourages young people to follow their dreams. "The sky's the limit to what young people can achieve today," she says confidently.

Visit Higgins International Inc.'s Web site at www.higginsinc.com *

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Little Miss Chief Gourmet Products

Smoked Salmon Spawns Success

by Richard Landis

Ellen Melcosky lives by a philosophy passed down through generations: Always be proud of who you are and where you come from. Listen to your Elders, because we can learn from their wisdom. Respect the land and all that Mother Earth has to offer. And, if you can't get it right the first time, try again.

"It's a way of living that my great-grandmother passed down to my grandmother, who passed it down to my mother, who passed it down to me," says Melcosky, a member of the Esketemc First Nation in British Columbia.

Growing up in Cariboo and Chilcotin country, Melcosky and her six brothers and one sister learned to live off the land — preserving wild berries, meat and fish by canning or drying. Another important part of their daily diet was salted and smoke-dried salmon.

Little did Melcosky know that those childhood lessons would one day transform her life.

In 1967, she met her husband-to-be, **Edward**. The couple raised two sons and a daughter. After the children graduated from school, Melcosky decided she wanted to return to the workplace. Trouble was, she found herself in jobs that either paid poorly or gave her little satisfaction.

Meanwhile, at home and in her spare time, Melcosky was smoking salmon. The result was such a hit with neighbours and friends that she finally decided to start her own business. In 1995, she founded her Westbank, B.C.-based company, **Little Miss Chief Gourmet Products**.

Never one to stand still, Melcosky continued to tinker with the smoked salmon brining recipe passed down for generations on her mother's side.



Ellen Melcosky: "If you can't get it right the first time, try again."

"My mom had her own ideas about brine — as I'm sure my grandmother had before her — and I decided to play around with the recipe. We had eight smokehouses in our backyard and I would just experiment like crazy. At this time, we had moved to the Okanagan Valley, which was gaining rapid recognition for its fine wine. That's when I decided to introduce white wine into my brining method. While this substantially increases brining costs, I feel it results in a product that's unique in quality, texture and flavour."

The result? Judging from the reaction of colleagues, the food industry and customers, Melcosky's smoked salmon is definitely a success.

Recently, the First Nations Business Association awarded Little Miss Chief the Finalist Mistapew Award in recognition of the company's achievement. *Food in Canada* included Melcosky's company in its "Top 10" list. *Profit* magazine declared Little Miss Chief a "winner." The firm has also been nominated for the 'Canada Export 2001 Award.'

At the end of the day, Melcosky attributes her success to a simple recipe: "Like a lot of people, I took something I was taught as a child, added support from family and friends and mixed it all up with a lot of hard work."

For more information, contact Little Miss Chief Gourmet Products at lmchief@silk.net ★

Tammy Beauvais Designs

Grandmother Inspired Young Mohawk Designer

by Annabelle Dionne

Young Mohawk designer **Tammy Beauvais** understands very well that starting your own business is no ticket to the easy life. “You have to work hard to make a name for yourself,” she says.

Beauvais’s name is getting more attention these days, thanks to the cashmere shawls she created for the wives of 34 heads of state attending the Summit of the Americas in Québec City. She made the shawls at the request of **Aline Chrétien**, wife of the Prime Minister. Beauvais has received some orders for her clothing as a result of that high-profile exposure. But she’s very aware that she’s just starting out, and that a great deal of work lies ahead.

Opening her own fashion design company, **Tammy Beauvais Designs**, in Kahnawake, Quebec in January 1999, was her childhood dream come true. Since she was 10 years old, Beauvais has wanted to follow in her grandmother’s footsteps. A highly respected member of the community, her grandmother made traditional clothing for children and adults. “She had a big influence on my work,” says Beauvais, who incorporates traditional Mohawk symbols into her designs.

In just two-and-a-half years, Beauvais has succeeded in creating her own niche in the fashion world. With the help of her friend, **Marvin Delormier**, her designs are now sold in more than 40 boutiques in Canada and the United States. “Marvin was a big help in finding stores interested in selling my work,” Beauvais explains. “I find the rest of my business on the road, at pow-wows, conferences and trade shows.”

The young designer’s next goal is to open an Aboriginal Fashion Centre in Kahnawake — a project that will likely take a few more years before it becomes a reality. “I can’t achieve this



Tammy Beauvais: “You have to work hard to make a name for yourself.”

dream by myself,” Beauvais admits. “I need the support of my community and of other designers. I’ve already met with one designer in Kahnawake and another one in Toronto to get the project going.”

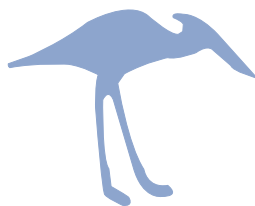
To realize this dream, Beauvais plans to hire about 20 people to produce authentic Aboriginal clothing of the highest quality. The Centre will offer

training on computer-based design, and provide international marketing services to Aboriginal people from North America and around the world. It will also help develop international partnerships for the exchange of materials for clothing created by Aboriginal designers. Beauvais recognizes this is a tall order, but she has no doubt about the project’s feasibility. “It’s big, but it can be done,” she says confidently.

In May, Beauvais attended the 8th World Summit of Young Entrepreneurs in Brussels, Belgium, with the help of funding from Aboriginal Business Canada. There, her idea for the Aboriginal Fashion Centre was very well received, and caught the interest of five young designers from Laos, Ireland, Nigeria, Uganda and

Benin. With these new colleagues, Beauvais plans to create an international design centre on the Internet so that young designers from around the world can offer each other support and advice. She sees the Internet site as an exciting complement to the Aboriginal Fashion Centre, and a project from which young Aboriginal designers worldwide can benefit.

For more information, visit the Tammy Beauvais Designs Web site at www.tammybeauvais.com *



From Employment Services to Database Design

by Raymond Lawrence

Juggling courses for her business degree, business-related research, a number of small projects, and a family of four children, **Sandra Belliveau** is following in her parents' footsteps.

The Fort Folly First Nation resident recently launched her own Internet-based business, **Administrative Business Solutions**. Belliveau's new enterprise is built on what she learned from watching her entrepreneurial parents and from working for other people, plus her own vision of providing high-quality services that meet current demands.

Her company offers a wide range of human resource services, from recruiting to providing temporary staff to meet clients' needs. The firm's comprehensive business services include accounting and payroll management, event and fundraising co-ordination, desktop publishing,

database design and management, and a 24-hour dictation line. "Our rates are quite competitive, as we are an Internet-based establishment, which means low overhead costs," says Belliveau.

"I've always wanted to be my own boss, and having grown up seeing my parents in business for themselves, I saw the freedom in it and the chance to make your own decisions and to know that the profits are coming back to you."

"There was a lot of hard work but we had a really good life," she adds. "I have a lot of respect for the way they handled things and now I try to pass that along whenever I can. I watched them juggle things which I guess is where I get my flexibility from...they've given me a lot of advice along the way, including legal advice, and taught me how to deal with people."

Belliveau says she got her entrepreneurial dream under way by thoroughly researching the market and getting the right kind of on-the-job training. She is working toward her business degree part-time, and also taking advantage of on-line courses.

"It can be quite difficult, but I can do a lot of work at night because a lot of it is designing things like manuals and Web sites," she says of her dual role as mother and businessperson. "I've always wanted to build on my skills and when we decided to have more children, I decided to take that time for research and development, doing the paperwork, legal work, and market research. I did it all on a part-time basis."

Her immediate plan is to focus on marketing and training techniques to increase business activity under the federal government's Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business — an opportunity she believes has yet to reach its full potential. "There really has to be more of a push from the Aboriginal side because this policy just holds so much opportunity," she emphasizes.

"I think a big problem Aboriginal businesses encounter is they don't market and push themselves on people," she says. "And you really have to if you want to sell whatever goods and services you offer, or people won't know you're there and what you can provide." To help businesses in their marketing push, she developed a regional Aboriginal business directory, classified by industry.

"I am just a businessperson, and it doesn't matter if I'm a woman or an Aboriginal businessperson — I have a goal in mind and that's what matters," she says.

For more information, visit the company Web site at www.e-business-adminsolution.com ★

Aboriginal Women in the Workforce — a Snapshot

- The growth in the number of self-employed Aboriginal women is double that for women generally.
- Women entrepreneurs comprise a larger proportion of the Aboriginal self-employed than is the case nationally for non-Aboriginal women.
- ▶ 57 per cent of Aboriginal women over the age of 15 are active in the labour force.
- ▶ The majority of working Aboriginal women are involved in sales and service, followed by:
 - business, finance and administration
 - social science, education, government services and religion
 - health
 - management
 - processing, manufacturing and utilities
 - art, culture, recreation and sport
 - trade, transportation and equipment operation
 - primary industries
 - natural and applied sciences

Sources:

- *Aboriginal Business Survey: Statistics Canada in partnership with Industry Canada, 1996.*
- ▶ *Aboriginal Women: A Profile from the 1996 Census*, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, August, 2001.

First Nations Vending Services/White Bear Springs Bottled Water

Lorraine Bear Makes Vending Machines Work for Her

by Wendy MacIntyre

Lorraine Bear affectionately describes her vending machines as “monsters.” These huge, heavy machines have helped Bear build a thriving business in Winnipeg — **First Nations Vending Services**. Since 1996, her coin-operated machines have dispensed soft drinks, snacks and coffee in restaurants, schools, offices, and retail and business centres throughout the city.

Bear first hit on the idea of a vending machine business when developing a business plan at Grant MacEwan Community College in Edmonton. She wanted to run a business that would also leave her time to raise a family. “The machines do most of the work,” she says.

First Nations Vending also offers office and restaurant coffee and bottled water services. It was customers’ demand for bottled water from a single supplier that sparked Bear’s idea for her most recent business venture — White Bear Springs bottled water.

“It’s spring water from Manitoba,” explains Bear, a member of the Peguis First Nation. “It’s totally First Nations-initiated and -developed and it follows traditions.”

While Bear sees her vending business as strictly local to Winnipeg, “water I can sell anywhere,” she says. “I’m positioning myself in the marketplace.”

Helping her with that market positioning is the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota American Indian Chamber of Commerce signed in April. The MOU is encouraging increased trade south of the border for Aboriginal-owned businesses in Winnipeg.

“I’ve been fortunate,” says Bear of the impact of the MOU and an earlier Indigenous Trade Mission to Minnesota in May 2000. “I’ve made some superb contacts.” One of those business contacts is helping her market White Bear Springs water in South Dakota, Nevada and New Mexico.

In August, through the Native American Business Alliance, her MOU contact introduced her to representatives of major U.S. corporations, including Nestlé and General Motors. “Anything is possible, provided you do the right networking,” Bear maintains.

But Bear’s experience with First Nations Vending has taught her the importance of caution in business. “Money’s not everything,” she says. “As long as I can balance the business with time with my son, then the business is a success.”

Her son, now four and a half, was born the year she founded her vending business. For the first two years, Bear

had to continue her job as a resource teacher, and often worked 18 hours a day. Her husband also devoted himself to the business for those crucial first years.

Although Bear is content to keep First Nations Vending as a “micro-business,” her marketing plans for White Bear Springs reach much farther afield. She has already developed an educational package to accompany her product, focusing on “water’s relationship with people, plants and animals.” Retailers will be able to offer this package to local schools, and help promote children’s respect for the environment. Bear also has a Web site under construction for White Bear Springs water.

“We’re in the loop now,” says Bear confidently of her exciting networking opportunities south of the border.

In addition to her own ventures, Bear supports other Aboriginal businesses in the city by volunteering her time as Chair of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce’s Aboriginal Economic Development Committee.

For more information about Bear’s companies, visit www.firstnationsvending.com *



Pamela Baker Builds Business on Her Heritage

by Diane Koven

Pamela Baker has no problem combining the elements of the many cultures in which she lives and works. She then applies the inspiration she draws from her varied experience to her successful fashion business, Touch of Culture/TOC Legends.

A member of the Squamish Nation, Baker lives on the Capilano Reserve in North Vancouver.

“They called us urban Indians,” she says, “but it was great because we have the river, the ocean and we kind of stayed isolated.”

Her father, **Dan**, a descendant of **Mary Capilano**, is Coast Salish from the Squamish Nation; her mother, **Lucy**, is Kwakiutl, a direct descendant of Tlingit Chilkat Weaver **Mary Ebbet**, the Hunt Family of Fort Rupert and the Nelson Family of Kingcome Inlet.

All these hereditary influences are evident in Baker’s artistic designs.

After completing a course in fashion merchandising in the late 1970s, Baker spent several years in the United States co-ordinating fashion shows. By 1985, she was ready to come home. She established her business in her community in order to maintain her culture and stay close to her roots.

“I have always loved clothes and fabric,” says Baker of her decision to enrol in the Textile Arts program at Capilano College, from which she graduated in 1994. Based on her academic success, the Squamish Nation’s education director recommended that she further her education at a top design school. With her two sons in tow, Baker once again set out for the United States, completing in three gruelling years the four-year B.A. in Fashion Design at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles.



In the past few years, Baker has been steadily expanding and enhancing her business. She added a large extension to her home where, she says, “we teach, train and design. We have a retail front and two large studios. Downstairs, we design sportswear and ready-to-wear for retail and wholesale to the public.”

The business employs First Nations members in the sportswear and couture studios. “Both the students and employees are trained to do couture beading and embroidery for our quality products,” Baker explains. “TOC continues to expand and will continue to employ First Nations members in order to promote self-sufficiency.”

As part of her business plan, Baker has hired a marketing director. “Now,” she says, “I can be ‘Pam the Designer.’ I am looking forward to designing a few collections and expanding our marketing.”

Baker has won several awards for her elegant evening-wear designs, including the prestigious Arthur Gilbert Award in her senior year at Otis College. Her winning entry, which incorporated “burned” velvet, featured an Aboriginal-influenced design. To her great delight, the dress was displayed in the window of the famous Neiman Marcus department store in Beverly Hills.

Baker has showcased her designs in Los Angeles and Toronto, and was invited to do so in Geneva. Illustrations she presented in Italy have been positively received. With high hopes and confidence in her future, Baker says, “One day you will see one of my dresses at the Academy Awards.”

For more information, contact the TOC Legends Web site at <http://www.toclegends.com/> ★



Portrait

“Because I’m Me”

Judith G. Bartlett, M.D.

Métis

Physician and Entrepreneur

by Fred Favel

I’ve had so many people say to me, ‘Well, you’re not like a doctor or any doctor that I know.’ My answer has always been, ‘That’s because I’m me!’

When Judith Bartlett decided to go to university, she went through a battery of aptitude tests. The tests concluded that she should become a sewing-machine operator. She was also told that there was one particular profession for which she didn’t have the intelligence or aptitude. That was medicine... so Bartlett became a doctor. With that kind of history, it should come as no surprise that Bartlett also co-owns a company that manufactures specialized parts for the aerospace industry, managing the business in between her work as a physician, researcher and volunteer.

Bartlett, one of 11 children, was born and raised in the small community of Herb Lake, northern Manitoba. Her parents were Ojibway and Cree, and the family can trace its ancestry back to the Plains of Abraham. Like many Aboriginal families of the time, Bartlett’s parents moved wherever work was available. She looks back with some humour at her father’s absence from the household. “Dad left when I was 13. Well, he didn’t leave. He just never came back from the bush.”

At the age of 15, Bartlett was on her own. After a summer with her grandfather in The Pas, she decided to stay there, take a job and go back to high school. She spent four months in Winnipeg taking Grade 11, then returned to The Pas, working as a waitress and short-order cook. Her fledgling career in the hospitality business ended when she was refused time off to attend her mother’s funeral, and she quit her job in response. Marriage and kids followed soon thereafter. By 1976, Bartlett was a single parent with two kids and a dream of going back to school. “I had the option of three things,” she says, “waitress, welfare or go back to school, and the motivation at the time was really for my children, not wanting them to have to go on welfare because I knew what it was like when I was 13 and 14...They were two and four when I started into my upgrading.”

Bartlett was originally interested in biological technology. But after spending a year at Red River Community College in Winnipeg, she discovered that this field meant “cleaning out rat cages essentially, and I knew that I was an individual who needed to be around other people...I didn’t really learn much. What I gained mostly was confidence that I could do it.”

Her goal then became a university degree, initially in social work. How did she manage as a single parent, attending school at the same time? “To put it into perspective, I was in subsidized housing. My rent was \$64, because that was a quarter of my income.” After being refused a student allowance to help her attend university, she remembers “sitting outside the office just sobbing my eyes out and my little guy, four years old, saying ‘Don’t cry Mom, don’t cry Mom.’” Ultimately, she did receive \$431, which was to last her two months. Then academic scholarships provided the support she needed.

During her first year of university, Bartlett’s petite stature made it possible for her to save money by buying her own clothing in children’s stores. Laughing, she describes one of her purchases. “So I bought these boots, real cheap you know, and here we were walking across this quadrangle over fresh snow and I looked back, and I’ve got teddy-bear

footprints. Two years I had to wear those boots, so I always use that story when I start workshops as a lesson in humility.”

Realizing that medicine “was the perfect opportunity to be able to mix the science interest with people interest,” she decided to enter a program designed to support Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal northerners in university. After three years of premedical studies, she was accepted into the medicine program — an extremely demanding course of study. Bartlett failed her first year, but “it was wonderful after that!” In 1987, she became one of the first three Aboriginal women to graduate from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba.

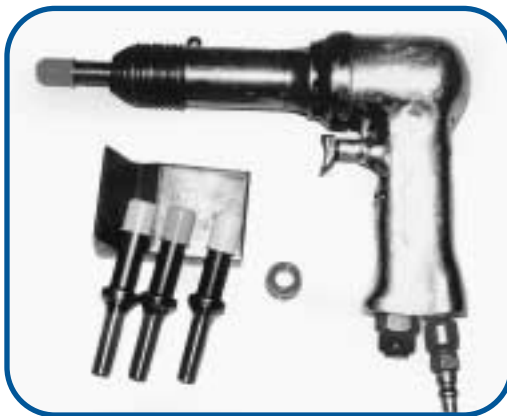


Photo: Fred Favel

Bartlett initially worked in northern Manitoba as a family practice physician, and then as a senior manager for the Manitoba Region of Medical Services Branch, Health Canada. In 1996, she entered a community health degree program. She is currently working on the thesis requirement for this master’s degree. Bartlett is a one-person dynamo as student, researcher, physician, volunteer board director of three organizations and business operator. To list just a sample of her activities, she is a research associate at the Manitoba Centre for Aboriginal Health Research; a staff physician for the Department of Psychiatry’s Chemical Withdrawal Unit, Health Sciences Centre; Chair, Board of Directors, National Aboriginal Health Organization; Chair-Elect, Board of Trustees, United Way of Winnipeg; and Co-chair, Board of Directors, Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre. As well, Bartlett was the founding vice-president of the Native Physicians Association in Canada, and has served in many other national and provincial organizations and committees.

Her self-described passion is her pioneering work on the Aboriginal Medicine Wheel Life Promotion Framework, a holistic approach in which health workers look at the entire person and his or her environment, when providing care. Used by the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre, this method is being studied by regional health authorities and others in the province.

And Bartlett’s role as an entrepreneur? She and her husband own Jade Enterprises, a company that provides products for the aerospace industry. They have invented a way to eliminate the stress cracks on rivets caused by the impact of a rivet gun. This small, but necessary, invention is being handled by Wesco of Phoenix, Arizona, the world’s largest distributor of aerospace products. Since its beginnings in 1997, Jade Enterprises has sold 200,000 units of its product called Snap Soc, and has an order pending for 47,000. Bartlett’s husband is the creative partner, while she handles administration, design application and marketing.



Snap Soc is a tool invented by Bartlett and her husband for their company, Jade Enterprises, which provides products for the aerospace industry.

“I’m not the most intelligent person in the world,” says Bartlett modestly. “I’m intelligent, but I’m not a rocket scientist or anything, but I work hard. That’s how I got through — hard work. You’ve got to focus, you’ve got to stick to it, you can’t let anything get in your way, and you have to control your own emotional self.”

Fred Favel is an Aboriginal writer and communications consultant.

