

Deborah Corber LL.M.

Experienced Lawyer, Negotiator and Executive with a demonstrated history of excellence in public law, strategic planning, policy making and non-profit organizational management. Creative, collaborative, consensus oriented, with exceptional communication, leadership and problem-solving skills.

Professional Experience

Principal Consultant in Indigenous Affairs, Corber Consulting (2018 - present)

Highlights:

- Ministerial Special Representative leading Canada's negotiations with the **Mohawk Council of Kahnawake** at the Kahnawà:ke-Canada Relationship table (governance) and the Seigneurie of Sault St. Louis grievance table (land claim)
- Chief Federal Negotiator for Canada, responsible for leading Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination process with the **Manitoba Métis Federation**.
- Consultation Lead for Canada responsible for consultations with 45 impacted Indigenous communities in British Columbia on the proposed Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project.

Chief Executive Officer, Federation CJA (2011 - 2017)

Highlights:

- Re-organized professional structure, building 'best in class' senior management team
- Led organization through two historic "Mega Missions" and ambitious Centennial year agenda to expand reach, build bridges to broader society, and raise \$180M in new endowments
- Re-shaped allocations model from historically-based to strategically focused, maximizing impact on clearly-identified communal needs and organizational objectives
- Evolved organization toward results-oriented and data-driven decision-making processes
- Modernized communications strategy and platforms to increase organizational transparency and stakeholder commitment
- Instilled collaborative culture, eliminating silos and ensuring cross-departmental and inter-agency cooperation and mutual respect

Consultant in Aboriginal Affairs (2001-2011)

Highlights:

- Chief Federal Negotiator in negotiations with **Mohawk Council of Akwesasne**, innovating and crafting Agreement in Principle approved by Cabinet in 2012
- As federal legal counsel, played lead role in concluding agreement to incorporate **Oujé-Bougoumou Cree Nation** into James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and developing related amendments to Cree-Naskapi Act

- In aftermath of Caledonia crisis, served as legal counsel to Canada in tripartite negotiations with **Six Nations of the Grand River and Ontario**
- Assisted Health Canada to conclude agreement transferring control of Aboriginal health programs and services to **British Columbia First Nations Health Authority**
- Provided legal advice on emerging **Aboriginal rights theories and jurisprudence** and related implications for federal Aboriginal policies, and policy advice on development of a sustainable approach to the payment of treaty annuities
- Produced report, "**Canada's Inherent Right of Self-Government Policy: Challenges and Opportunities 15 Years In**"
- Evaluated ten **dispute resolution projects** for Office of Indian Residential Schools Resolution, and produced 2-volume report including analysis, conclusions and recommendations (2001)

Legal Counsel & Senior Policy Advisor (1996-2001)

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Highlights:

- Lead role in negotiating **Kanesatake Land Governance Agreement**, securing Cabinet approval, and developing federal implementing legislation (Bill S-24)
- Legal and policy advisor to self-government negotiating tables with **Mohawks of Kahnawake, Council of Yukon First Nations, Meadow Lake Tribal Council** and **Sioux Valley**

Legal Counsel (1988-1996)

NATIVE LAW SECTION, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Highlights:

- Provided legal advice on **constitutional law, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, aboriginal and treaty rights, fiduciary relationship of the Crown and Aboriginal peoples, and international human rights** to client departments including Privy Council Office, Indian Affairs, Finance, Environment, Fisheries & Oceans, Solicitor-General, Health, Industry, National Defence and Canadian Heritage
- Lead Counsel in development of federal government's legal and policy approach to implementation of the **inherent right of self-government (1995)**
- Legal Counsel on federal delegation to 1992 constitutional reform discussions, assisting in negotiation and drafting of aboriginal provisions of **Charlottetown Accord**
- Member of Canadian delegation to U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Peoples (1989 and 1991)

Post-secondary Education

Master of Laws (LL.M.) (1987), Columbia University School of Law
Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) (1984), Osgoode Hall Law School, York University
Bachelor of Music (B.Mus.) (1981), McGill University

Voluntary Sector

Director, Queen Elizabeth Health Complex Community Services (until 2008)
Vice President, Agence Ometz (2008-2011)
Director, Lord Reading Law Society (2017-2019)
Trustee, McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (2018-Present)
Board Chair, Orchestre Classique de Montréal (2019-Present)

Awards

Department of Justice Merit Award (1993, 1996)
Deputy Minister's Outstanding Achievement Award, Dept. of Indian Affairs (2001)
Women of Action Honoree (2006)
Indian and Northern Affairs Service Excellence Award (2010)
Department of Natural Resources Team Merit Award, Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project (2019)

Languages

English, French

Updated November 2022