

Walking with the Grandmothers and Aunties Wisdom

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Abstract

Thirteen grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship share advice to help Métis thinkers strive and thrive in the academy. Through three themes of advice: 1) disregard colonial pressures, 2) create connections, and 3) be empowered by who you are; they share with us stories and examples that they want future scholars to know

Key words: methodology, Grandmothers, Aunties, Academy

Introduction

Laura Forsythe *d-ishinikaashon*. My name is Laura Forsythe. *Ma famii kawyesh* Pakan Town *d-oshciwak*. My family was from Pakan Town a long time ago. *Anosh ma famii* Winnipeg *wikiwak*. Today, my family lives in Winnipeg. *Ma Parentii* (my ancestors) are Huppe, Ward, Berard, Morin, and Cyr. My ancestors worked for the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. My ancestors once owned Lot 31, in the site of Pakan Town. I am descended from buffalo hunters. I am descended from voyageurs. I am descended from the victors at Frog Plain. I am descended from farmers, ranchers, teamsters, seamstress, and tradespeople; I come from the working class that built Manitoba and the Métis Nation. This Métis introduction follows the model of Métis scholars like LaRocque (1975, 2015a), Acoose (1995), and Adese et al. (2017) to describe the researcher and contextualize the conversation more fully.

In dreaming of a world in the academy that holds space for Métis scholarship and welcomes our future generations of Métis thinkers, I recognize the need for passionate Métis academics to thrive in these spaces often geared toward excluding or ignoring us. In this article¹, the words of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship will provide advice through their experiences of challenges and successes in the academy. The following article fulfills their responsibility to the women who walk behind them and my responsibility to share freely the

¹ This article has been adapted from my unpublished dissertation, *It Needs to Be Said: Exploring the Lived Realities of the Grandmothers and Aunties of Métis Scholarship*

knowledge I have received. The thirteen grandmothers' and aunties' advice, with their different walks of life and widely varied experiences with and in the academy, weaves a rich tapestry of ways to survive and thrive. To be good relatives, the grandmothers and aunties recognized the aspects of their practice that helped them and passed on that knowledge when asked to share advice for future generations. The words they have offered for that purpose can help ensure that all can walk the path through the academy informed and with a sense of well-being. So how do Métis scholars survive and thrive in the academy while living up to that call? By listening to the words of the grandmothers and aunties. Their reflections can be distilled into three core advice themes: 1) disregard colonial pressures, 2) create connections, and 3) be empowered by who you are.

Grandmothers & Aunties

This overall project's scope was the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship, defined as self-identifying Métis women in the generation born between 1949 and 1969 and whose contributions to the scholarly discourse began to appear in the late 1970s. The wisdom shared in this article has come from Verna DeMontigny and Heather Souter, whose work seeks to revitalize Michif, one of the languages of the Métis; Emma LaRocque, who advocated for and initiated the second Indigenous Studies department in the country; Lorraine Mayer, the first recognized Indigenous philosopher in Canada; Christi Belcourt artist, activist, author strives for language revitalization; Rita Bouvier esteemed poet and long time advocate for anti-racist education; Verna St. Denis, whose work in Indigenous education reframed how decolonial teaching is approached; Brenda Macdougall the first Chair of Métis Research in Canada; Kim Anderson Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Relationships whose research redefined our understanding as Métis women; Sherry Farrell Racette interdisciplinary scholar, curator, artist, author and community historian; Jean Teillet whose work redefined our understandings of both Métis law; Céleste McKay a Métis lawyer whose international research includes United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Implementation; and Jeannine Carrière whose work resulted in policy change in Indigenous adoptions and child well-being in Social Work. These thirteen women exemplify the contributions to law, cultural studies, linguistics, Canadian literature, critical social justice, and women's and gender studies that have helped redefine our understandings of Métis.

Methods

This research aimed to seek knowledge and wisdom from our grandmothers and aunties, who, as Métis people, were historically our teachers. Through sitting with thirteen self-identifying Métis women born between 1949 and 1969 whose work began to appear in the late 1970s and raising our awareness of their contributions, connections, motivations, and scholarship, we can enhance our understanding of how the Métis grandmothers and aunties shaped their fields in Métis scholarship and have created space for future Métis women to thrive in the academy. Following a framework created by the Métis Women Association in "It Needs to Be Said," which spoke truths about their reality in 1978, this study strives to do the same for Métis women in the academy. By speaking the truths of the grandmothers and aunties of Métis scholarship, we hope to know them and walk forward seeking to deal with our reality.

As a researcher, enhancing a Métis-specific research paradigm built by other Métis scholars working on Métis-focused research is another step in my commitment to be part of the future of Métis scholarship. The research employs a *Wahkootowin* theoretical framework. Maria Campbell and Brenda Macdougall brought the Cree concept into the collective Métis consciousness. In discussing Cree ownership, Macdougall (2010) clarifies that its origins in the Cree language infuse the Métis philosophy with our “dominant maternal ancestry” (p. 7), just as some Michif dialects are ancestrally tied to Cree. *Wahkootowin* is inherited from Cree thought and is often equated with “all my relations” (Adese et al., 2017; Gaudry, 2014; Macdougall, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2017). In research, *Wahkootowin* dictates how we must behave; as Campbell (2007) states, “from birth to death our responsibilities and reciprocal obligations” (p. 5) must be upheld, including how we conduct ourselves in the academy. *Wahkootowin* requires researchers to “behave in culturally appropriate ways” (Macdougall, 2017a, p. 8) while ensuring we look out for one another. My obligation to these women is to include their voices as my relatives and honour their words through my analysis.

The intertwined Michif methodology combines methodologies theorized by Métis women. The first is *Keeoukaywin*, theorized by Gaudet (2016, 2018, 2019) and featured in the work of Flamino et al. (2020) and Linquist et al. (In press UMP), for academic purposes as “the process of meeting over tea, listening to and talking with one another and understanding each other’s point of view” (Flaminio et al., 2020, p. 58). Second, *Lii Taab di Faam Michif* theorized by Gaudet (2019, 2020, In press UMP et al.) stemming from Métis thinkers’ writings of Kitchen table talks such as Farell Racette (2004) & Mattes (2019), by considering the specific ways that Métis peoples gather around kitchen tables and positions women to reclaim space (Gaudet, 2019) while providing room to sit and drink tea (Ward et al., 2021). Finally, I utilized *Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk*, which I theorized by expanding on the listening and storytelling featured in the work of Lavallee (2014, 2016 et al.), Richardson (2004), and Bouvier (In Press UMP) and utilized in previous studies (Forsythe, 2022). Lindquist et al. (In Press UMP) state that Métis women’s research methodologies are kinship-centred, evident in all three intertwined methodologies in this research.

Intertwining is inherently Métis, as witnessed through the creation of our language, Michif. Bakker (1997) first documented the Michif language with the help of some of the grandmothers and described the process of creating Michif, which has French nominal and verb stems combined with *nêhiyawêwin* nouns. Our language exemplifies how two sufficiently different languages can create one in a Métis context where the “grammatical affixes cannot be separated from the verb stems” (Bakker, 1997, p. 27). In the intertwined Michif methodology, the three methodologies are genetically related to each other, but like the language of Michif, the methodology used in this study does not fit into a family tree model; it does not have one parent but three, and it depends on all of them.

This study uses a Métis methodological approach to qualitative research to address the lived realities of Métis women who have been published in the academy but are often ignored by research. In my larger, unpublished dissertation (Forsythe, 2022), I shared the unique experiences of these Métis women and calls for a move outside the Indigenous umbrella and then need to recognize these women as part of a distinct Indigenous Nation (i.e., of the Red River Métis Nation) with their own experiences of peoplehood and nationhood. Within the academy, this

work aims to help fill the research gap created by assuming all Indigenous experiences are similar. I share a small piece of the larger story here with advice about survival in the academy.

Disregard Colonial Pressures

Under the theme of disregarding colonial institutional pressures to fix a 150-year-old problem that has created a wide range of urgent issues, the grandmothers and aunties gave the following guidance: prioritize, say no, decide which battles are futile, and recognize the freedom to relocate. When disregarding colonial pressures, two overarching stories emerged in what the grandmothers and aunties shared: the first is the permission to refuse; the second is that relocation is inherently Métis. By grounding their experiences in Métis history, contemporary Métis scholars can learn resiliency from those who preceded them.

Permission to Refuse

With new demand for Métis scholars and the pressures placed on those in the academy in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, the grandmothers and aunties warned of over-demanding institutions. In response, they suggested setting boundaries and realistic expectations. When contemplating advice, Kim Anderson stressed, “knowing you can just say no. It’s an important one, knowing that you can just say no. Focus on your own work.” Of course, that work can be profoundly personal and consist of “research that builds on the strengths of your community,” as suggested by Verna St. Denis, but Emma LaRocque also cautions that “one should never feel pressured to have to always defend or produce works in one’s identity in order to fight erasure.” Many grandmothers and aunties spoke about being pulled in multiple directions and regretting not remaining entirely focused on their research goals for the Métis community.

Métis scholars can be pulled in numerous directions, making every matter appear urgent. The call to aid their institutions will seem pressing, but Emma LaRocque offers caution:

I have seen a change since the 1970s—actually since about the mid-1980s. But development of specific Métis scholarship has been very slow. Recently, there have been some Research Chairs on Métis scholarship. And there is the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

The academy changes at a glacial pace; the grandmothers and aunties share how they have worked to effect such change, with racism taking them away from their ultimate goals. Sherry Farrell Racette reminds scholars that “this is not a short scrap; this is a lifetime, and so you need to look at the long game for yourself and what you want to accomplish with the finite span of a career.”

As Sherry suggests, an excellent example of living one's truth is her former colleague Emma LaRocque, who has earned a full professorship and over ninety publications. She said, “I just don’t do administration. I absolutely refused. I have been asked to be department head several times here and elsewhere and thought ‘nah, I don’t think so.’” Having decided what is important to her, Emma focuses on research and writing.

In choosing priorities, the grandmothers and aunts spoke about the difficulty of showing their institutions the damage Western institutions and their systems did to Indigenous communities. As Verna St. Denis shared, “they weren’t used to having the mirror turned up,” and unwinnable battles can lie in that tension. Sherry Farrell Racette permits future scholars to “not assume responsibility for fights you can’t win. And for the level of the institutional change that is going to take generations because you can get totally sucked into that, and it is soul-destroying.”

There is a need to be guarded not only for personal preservation but also in the institutional hierarchy, according to Lorraine Mayer, head of the Department of Native Studies at Brandon University and the editor of the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. She offered a cautionary note:

It’s their way or the highway; be careful how you walk it. If you are strong enough, fight it. But if you don’t have the strength yet, don’t. I got that from a woman one time that said, “I am not going to fight your battles because I don’t have tenure,” and I realized, “You know, she’s right.”

This episode caused Lorraine to recognize—after decades in the system—that there is a danger for emerging scholars without the protection of tenure in pushing back against the institution:

Don’t put a young Métis scholar at risk by having them join all the battles. Let the older Métis women or...the older Métis women that have been in academia a little longer fight for you until you get what you need behind you and the protection you need. Because they are brutal; it is brutal, that’s for sure.

Awareness of the institutional landscape is essential to the success of new scholars and lends itself to another theme in this chapter: creating connections and using mentors. Nevertheless, Lorraine’s words caution Métis scholars to recognize their power and privilege in an institutional hierarchy.

Relocation is Inherently Métis

Although Sherry Farrell Racette points to Métis ancestors’ experience and ability to survive, she reminds us that Métis history is rife with relocating and starting again in new lands with new people as part of Métis agency: “my advice would be if you are in a toxic environment, don’t wait around because you will get gaslighted into believing that it’s our fault or our responsibility and it’s not.” However, admitting defeat and finding a new position is sometimes necessary; Sherry has changed institutions throughout her career before relocating to the University of Regina to be close to her grandchildren.

Knowing oneself and one’s career and life expectations is crucial to weighing the advice given by Christi Belcourt:

If your soul or your spirit is not jibing with what you are doing, then your instinct will tell you and just go ahead and move and do something different. Don’t feel obligated to stay

in something that is not fulfilling your spirit because, at the end of the day, that is what you are here for if you are on your own journey.

Métis scholars are not obligated to stay, and the demand for Indigenous scholars is so high in the early 2020s that the transition is far easier than in previous decades. However, Métis scholars must continually assess their priorities and ask whether their current reality is the right fit.

In disregarding colonial institutional pressures, Christi Belcourt, Lorraine Mayer, Sherry Farrell Racette, Verna St. Denis, Emma LaRocque, and Kim Anderson focused on prioritizing, being selective, avoiding unwinnable fights, and recognizing other opportunities. By grounding themselves in the experiences of Métis history, Métis scholars can emulate the resiliency of their ancestors by permitting themselves to refuse and realizing that relocation is inherently Métis.

Be Empowered by Who You Are

In the theme of being empowered by who you are, the grandmothers and aunties offered advice broken down into four themes: 1) stay true to yourself, 2) include your ancestors, 3) look after yourself, and 4) love what you do. In the colonial institution built on white supremacy historically geared toward assimilating Métis into the broader body politic, Métis scholars must remain empowered by who they are.

The grandmothers and aunties spoke passionately about being empowered by who you are. Sherry Farrell Racette shared that the Métis presence in the academy empowers others: a student once commented to her, “I love how you disrupt the academy just by being yourself,” prompting her to suggest that “I think it’s really important to be true to yourself and just be yourself; be your messy half-breed self and be an unapologetic half-breed self.” Staying true to herself was an essential pillar for Sherry, who demonstrated it throughout a 40-year career in the community and the academy: “being true to yourself is really important and not feeling like you have to become different.” Christi Belcourt speaks to beating your own path, grounded in who you are. Brenda Macdougall asserted, “I have never worked from a position where I didn’t see myself as a Métis person or Métis scholar,” offering one effective model for future scholars.

A crucial aspect of being who you are is speaking your truth. Jeannine Carrière encouraged scholars to be true to their voices by saying, “don’t be afraid to say things that might have someone thinking. I think we are complex people, and we bring that complexity to our academic work, and that’s a good thing.” Brenda Macdougall stated in being assertive and committing to your truth, “you have to decide not to be the wallflower and just do what you are going to do and say what you are going to say because it’s important.”

Practically honouring who one is can mean ignoring the societal expectations linked to one’s age. Many grandmothers and aunties came to the academy later in life, including Lorraine Mayer, who started her undergraduate program at 34, Heather Souter, who completed her master’s at 54, and Kim Anderson, who started her PhD at forty. Jean Teillet, who went to law school at 40, said, “one of the first things I would say is don’t worry if you aren’t there when you are 20...it doesn’t matter; you can be in the academy when you are sixty. It doesn’t make any difference, and you will learn a lot in between.” All the grandmothers’ and aunties’ careers,

community influence, and publication records demonstrate that age need not be an impediment. Emma LaRocque put it simply: “just be really good scholars; really put effort into being good scholars, and the rest will follow.”

Include Your Ancestors

Celeste McKay reminds us that “it’s important that you acknowledge the knowledge keepers, acknowledge the people who take care of the families, the grandmas that take care of their grandchildren so their daughters can do their work and that intergenerational support that’s there.” This acknowledgement pays tribute to those who walked ahead of and alongside the Métis scholars working in the academy and community to assert Métisness. Sherry Farrell Racette reminds us of the difficult journey of the grandmothers and aunties’ ancestors to survive and thrive and the need to bring them into the scholarship of today and tomorrow. Rita Bouvier echoes this approach in her comments on resilience:

Consider their actions of embracing and adopting what they needed for survival—a language that demonstrates ingenuity, kinship ties that transcend racialized divides, and a strong sense of place, relationality, and belonging to the land they were born into. We must carry this forward into the future as Métis and as global citizens.

Rita insisted that “we have a legacy to honor and fulfill. Like our ancestors, we too are imaginative and resourceful persons. Jeannine Carrière encouraged scholars and knowledge producers to “bring everything you are and your ancestors into your work, and you will be okay.”

Look After Yourself

The academy is a hard place to work and study, as highlighted, for example, in the eleven symptoms of erasure discussed by the grandmothers and aunties (Forsythe, 2022). In thinking about how Métis scholars need to look after themselves under these conditions, the grandmothers and aunties shared practical advice and the overall mindset needed to prevail. Sherry Farrell Racette painted a realistic landscape of Métis existence both inside and outside academia:

We’ve also had to balance that in ways that we can sustain ourselves. And so, I think with this at some point it’s not going to be hard. No, it’s always going to be hard. It has always been hard; it was hard for my mom, my grandma, my great grandma.

As many grandmothers and aunties recommended, this reminder is a grounding of the importance of looking after oneself, including practical needs around well-being, finances, family, and the larger community. Brenda Macdougall reminded scholars, “you have to make space for all of those things, and it has to fill you up because we put a lot out, so we have to fill ourselves back up somehow.”

Céleste McKay, who also studied at the University of Victoria, completed her law degree far from home and has worked internationally. She shared advice that she found beneficial: “Going back home during the holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter) was super important and helpful.” Wherever research, work, or school takes a scholar, grounding oneself in

the community is essential. As Rita Bouvier says, “it’s important to remain centred in community, however you do that”; she stays connected to Île-à-la-Crosse despite leaving decades ago.

In reflecting on the current situation affecting Métis scholars throughout the country isolated in siloed departments or at institutions with few Indigenous hires, Brenda Macdougall notes, “I think you have to remember that while you may not have any other Métis people where you are, that doesn’t mean you lose connection to people that are a part of you.” This view fits well with the Métis tradition of families having long stretches apart but supporting each other when reuniting.

Love What You Do

The passion that fuels the Métis grandmothers and aunties is a love for research, policy, and the areas they have dedicated their lives to raising awareness. All the grandmothers and aunties spoke about their dedication to their written works. Each energized by a love of her subject matter and a sense of responsibility to her community. Brenda stated, “you have to do what you love. You can’t let someone else dictate what you are going to do; you can negotiate it, but you have to do what you love.”

The fight for language revitalization waged by grandmothers and aunties Verna DeMontigny, Heather Souter, and Christi Belcourt is fuelled by their love of Métis languages. As Verna put it, “most importantly, I don’t care what anyone else says; you got a goal, you got a dream, go for it.” In the 1970s, revitalizing Indigenous languages was woefully underfunded compared to today, and no postsecondary institutions were teaching them. There is still a fight to retain funding for Indigenous languages, with many efforts being grassroots and unfunded. However, due to the passion and effort they have used to reclaim languages that were in danger of disappearing, programming, funding, and language platforms are now available.

Emma LaRocque, Kim Anderson, Lorraine Mayer, and Brenda Macdougall have all worked toward altering the collective understanding of Métis history, and Brenda articulated the importance of identifying what fuels a scholar’s work:

I think you have to do what you love. Everybody wants you to do what they think is important, but if you don’t love it, you aren’t going to last. Whatever you do has to be yours, so you have to find your space, your voice, your sense of belonging; and once you find that, you will find comfort wherever you are.

The grandmothers and aunties Rita Bouvier, Verna St. Denis, and Sherry Farrell Racette started at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) working for educational reform. Sherry shared that

over time you will find the things you are really good at, that feed you, because there are things that only take from you. And even if you think that it’s a good thing for you to do, you need to have the balance of what feeds you.

All three know firsthand the struggle to change colonial education through the inclusive and anti-racist educational initiatives they have undertaken over the past forty years. Their relentless drive, buttressed by patience with the incremental change they have helped make over the years, nourishes them despite how draining that work can be.

Jeannine Carrière, Céleste McKay, and Jean Teillet are three grandmothers and aunts who have dedicated their lives to implementing provincial, federal, and international policy and legislative changes. Jean shared that there can be a desire to change the world and find a niche that can be overwhelming to new scholars, but focusing on what you love, which in her case was Métis and the law, can help make things work out:

It's hard in the academy to find a niche and to find your own voice on what you want to write about and how you are going to think about things. And my own experience with that is you just have to sit down and write.

In the theme of being empowered by who one is, the grandmothers and aunts reinforced the need to be grounded in who one is—along with one's ancestors, communities, and teachings—while acknowledging that an individual's motivations are vital to surviving and thriving in the academy.

Connections

Beyond staying connected to the community through reciprocal obligations fulfilled by *wahkootowin*, there were two other connections that grandmothers and aunts thought were critical to surviving and thriving in the academy: 1) staying connected to other Métis scholars and 2) staying connected to other Métis women.

Connections to Métis Scholars

First, to fight the invisibility detailed in Forsythe (2022) as a symptom of erasure, Métis must make themselves known to one another as a step to creating community. Work in the community extends to the academic community, as many grandmothers and aunts stressed collaborative research. Heather Souter said, “we need to have community, find community, and become part of the community. That's what will sustain us because the work is not easy.” The call to create community from the grandmothers and aunts is rooted deeply in Métis ways of being, as Christi Belcourt said:

I don't know how this is for everybody but for Métis people; we are community. We are community-minded, and we thrive in community; we hold things in the collective and the common, and a lot of our culture and our languages are collective and commonly held: our land use, our traditional knowledge, our art forms, all of those things that are a part of who we are.

In keeping with the theme of finding like-minded and motivated communities while staying true to Métis ways of being, Jean Teillet, who has worked on some of the highest-profile Indigenous law cases in history, stated the following:

A lot of my writing and thinking comes from being in the trenches and working on these things for years and years and years with what I have to say are some of the best minds in the country—people who have done extraordinary work—and I have been extremely blessed to be even in the room with these extraordinary people.

She attributed her successes to collaborative work with driven individuals and urged future academics to

surround yourself with as many people as you can that are doing good things because you will learn so much from watching how other people think....I believe in—very, very much in—collaboration and working together with people....I don't think life is meant to be lived by yourself and I don't think the academy is meant to be lived by yourself and if the academy is that, it's wrong.

In such teams, each person can bring different ideas and strengths to the work. As Céleste McKay states, “you need to work collaboratively.” However, she also shares from her experience in politics and policy on the international stage that many different players are needed on the team: “Ones who will take a punch publicly, negotiators who can see the other side, people who will break down barriers; and you need people willing to work in the academy because you have to be in those boardrooms.” In keeping with the different gifts needed for a community to thrive, others can be included if, as Rita Bouvier suggests, they are like-minded in their goals. Kim Anderson shares that in her experience of the amount of work required to survive and thrive, “you need people in the system to be able to move that along both Indigenous as well as allies’ rights. You have to find those people and work with them to make change in the institution.”

Connections to Métis Women

Beyond the need for connection to the community and working collaboratively are connections with other Métis women. Jeannine Carrière advised Métis scholars to “stay connected to like-minded people.” Métis scholars such as Monchalin and Monchalin (2016), whose work discusses navigating the academy as women, and Lindquist et al. (In Press UMP), who speak to academic aunties in the Métis community, are examples of emerging Métis scholars who embody this crucial advice from the grandmothers and aunties. Jeannine, who shared her experiences of isolation prior to other Métis women like Christine Welsh and Cathy Richardson coming to the University of Victoria, stated, “connections to other Métis women in the academy; it's really strong medicine for us.”

Céleste McKay shared that Métis student support helped her through law school by visiting another territory and recommending seeking “other Métis women who can support you when the times get tough.” Whether it is strength in numbers or camaraderie among those experiencing the same struggle, Jean Teillet advises: “for young academics and Métis women academics, I would say that you are not alone, and you need to be a part of this broader group.”

Kim Anderson emphasized that “having mentors is good; however that works, however you find them, maybe it's not always straightforward in how you do that,” while Heather Souter

recommended that academics “find yourself a mentor early on; preferably a Métis woman if at all possible.”

Staying connected to other Métis women scholars can create networks of support that enable reaching out to aunts and hashing over challenging situations with like-minded people who understand the complexities of being Métis in the academy. Strength can be found in working together, supporting, and relying on one another’s wisdom.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as an embodiment of *Wahkootowin*, this article fulfills the grandmothers’ and aunts’ responsibility to the women who walk behind them and my own responsibility to share freely the knowledge I have received while dreaming of how to improve the realities of future Métis thinkers. These words uphold Brenda Macdougall’s assertion that “our job is actually to make space for the next group of people to come through.” The grandmothers’ and aunts’ experiences in creating space in various disciplines and sharing their wisdom can help prepare future Métis women scholars to continue making progress and create space for those who will one day walk behind them. In the minds of the thirteen grandmothers and aunts of Métis scholarship profiled here, surviving, and thriving in the academy can be accomplished by following a three-step path: 1) disregard colonial pressures, 2) create connections, and 3) be empowered by who you are.

Biography

Dr. Laura Forsythe is a Métis scholar at the University of Winnipeg in the Faculty of Education. Forsythe's research focus is Métis -specific contributions to the academy, Métis inclusion efforts, and educational sovereignty. She is also an elected member of the Manitoba Métis Federation the official democratic and self-governing political representation of the Red River Métis.

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