

**August 26, 2013**  
**President's Message**

I invite all our Metis Citizens to join us for our 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly taking place on September 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> in Brandon. Each year our Assembly takes on the theme of an important and special event, issue or idea. This year it is "Our Time Has Come" which marks and celebrates this year's MMF Land Claim victory at the Supreme Court of Canada. The Court recognized the truth of our Metis history and vindicated our People's struggle for justice.

I welcome all our Metis Citizens, and the delegates who are able to join us at this year's gathering to reflect on our 143 years of perseverance since our Metis Ancestors became Canada's Negotiating Partners in Confederation and Founders of Manitoba. We remember the Reign of Terror and the trail of broken agreements that followed the solemn promise of 1.4 million acres of land for the future of our children. This promise was not kept

We also remember the 32-year legal challenge of the MMF versus Canada and Manitoba. When I became President, I said I would put our MMF Land Claim back on track and bring our case in front of the Supreme Court. After our hard-won struggle in the Manitoba and Canadian courts, together we have attained victory. With each success, in court and elsewhere – legal, political, economic - our strength as a Nation grows.

This Assembly also marks over forty-five years of modern Metis democratic government and elected leadership. Following in the footsteps of our Ancestors, we are continuing the great tradition upholding democratic principles and exercising our rights of self-governance and self-determination, harvesting and other traditional rights to our lands and waters, as well as our right to claim, pursue, and achieve justice.

It is the Metis People who delegate and provide direction to our Metis Government and its Institutions. This is a fundamental objective found in our MMF Constitution. It is through our MMF ballot-box elections, Regional Assemblies, and resolutions at the Annual General Assembly that our people delegate their authority and give direction to undertake initiatives, programs and services on their behalf. This year's Assembly will be no different.

This year the Assembly will review, deliberate, and act upon a number of proposed resolutions for constitutional amendments as well as other important resolutions providing direction. At earlier Assemblies in the 70s, 80s and 90s, there was much discussion on the lost opportunities for the growth and wellbeing of generations of our children because of Canada's broken promises. This undoubted will be a focus of this Assembly.

Since we started our Land Claim you insisted we must ensure tomorrow's children get the head start that was shamefully stolen from their Ancestors and that a future land claim settlement be put into a trust fund to protect and grow a legacy. In this, and other initiatives, we must ensure that our children and our Elders are always protected and taken care of now and well into the future.

I know that we will have a very successful 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly. I do hope you can join us. I wish our delegates the best of luck in their dialogue, debate and deliberations. I look forward to seeing you at our Assembly. Together we will continue to build our Metis Government and plan for our future.

I offer my prayers for our Elders and others who are sick or in poor health and cannot attend our Assembly and our celebration that "Our Time Has Come." I also offer my condolences to our families who have experienced the recent loss of a loved one.

Believe in Yourself – Believe in Metis.

Meeqwetch,