



Le Métis
EST. 1871



There can be no doubt that staying in touch with Citizens is important for your Métis Government. We are constantly advancing our national agenda and delivering new programs and services, as well as announcing new developments and activities to our Citizens. It can be a lot to keep up with, but transparent and accountable governance is critical to my leadership and to the approach of your elected officials in Cabinet.

Not only is it important to share with Citizens, we also know that it's a priority for you that we continue educating all Manitobans and Canadians about who we are and what we stand for. We are the Red River Métis, and our heritage, history, and contributions to Canada must be recognized and honoured, and we must continue to share our story. This is one of the ways we can ensure that our identity is well-understood by all, and no one can distort our culture, history, and heritage for their own purposes.

The ways we communicate with Citizens and educate others about who we are – these have been on my mind for quite some time.

Expanding our ability to tell our own stories

Relying on mainstream media outlets to share events of importance to our Nation is not always the most effective way of getting our stories out. I know it can be frustrating for our Citizens to read news stories that don't accurately reflect who we are. Sometimes we read phrases like "Métis and Indigenous" in news stories, reflecting a misunderstanding of the fact that the Red River Métis are an Indigenous people. Some outlets report stories out of places like Simcoe, Ontario, little realizing that organizations from places like this are making false claims to the history and identity of the Red River Métis.

It is clear that we must expand on our ability to tell our own stories. This is the only way we can be confident that the resulting information is accurate, and reflects the stories, thoughts, and events of the true and historic Métis Nation.

This means putting a greater focus on the stories of our community and our families, both past and present. It also means ensuring that we remind Citizens and Canadians about how far we've come, using archival videos, documents, and pictures to breathe new life into historic events.

We know that our Elders are precious for many reasons – one of those reasons is the history and knowledge they hold about the events of the past. Ste. Madeleine is a well-known story within our community, because it was carefully and thoroughly documented by Elders who remembered the events that took place there. We know there are Red River Métis towns and villages across the Homeland with important parts of our history to document. It's vital that we speak to Elders from these places and preserve their knowledge and wisdom for future generations, as well as Citizens and Canadians today.

Finding and recording our stories is only the first step. We must make sure we have the right platforms in place to share our stories and preserve our history, and that we reach as many people as we can with this accurate information. In 2023, we will make this important work an area of focus within your Métis Government.

Ways to keep in touch today

There's no doubt that we already have an effective communications system in place.

Remember, we use a large variety of communications tools to make sure you can stay informed of our activities. We make good use of billboards, radio and television commercials, along with advertisements in both regional and local newspapers to share information about our priorities and our key messages.

Social media is another significant way in which we engage with Citizens – and where we often promote important information or alert you to events taking place near you.

If you're a regular listener of the *Métis Hour* x2 on NCI every Saturday from 11-1, you know that this is another opportunity for Citizens to hear a report on our activities.

I encourage you to tune in to the program, along with reading our regular messages, and checking out our website and social media. We also send out

President's Message

thousands of emails to our Citizens with messages on important issues and announcements, as well as *Le Métis* and my President's Message. If you are not receiving these by email, please reach out to our communications department and they can ensure you are on our email "mailing" list.

Together, all these communications will give you ongoing updates, throughout the year, on the progress we're making towards the priorities you've told us are important to you.

Another very important way to share information and make decisions has always been the assembly. There are regular Local Meetings as well as Regional Meetings, and of course the Annual General Assembly.

Sharing our stories, talking with one another, making use of digital platforms and in-person gatherings where we can – these are all important parts of what make us a united Nation. Our Ancestors knew the importance and strength of our unity from the beginning. In 1856, Alexander Ross wrote a book called *The Red River Settlement*. In it, he says:

"Experience could not but have taught them, that however insignificant and powerless these people were while scattered by twos and threes about their distant parts, yet, assembled together in one place with one common interest, one common object in view, they must soon become formidable either as friends or foes."

Having a shared purpose and vision for the future was the way forward – only collectively could we fight against those who wanted to erase us, or free ourselves to pursue those objectives that were important to us. It is this collective mindset that distinguished us from anyone else in the Northwest. It is what continues to distinguish us today in the country now called Canada. That's why your active participation and continued engagement are foundational to our Nation, and always will be.

We will continually look for more ways to engage with Citizens, creating more videos of our recent activities, as well as finding ways to reflect back on historic moments for our Nation. I encourage you to keep an eye on our communications platforms, including social media, like YouTube. We have exciting things to communicate and share for this year and beyond, and I can't wait for Citizens to see where we are going.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. D.M. ∞

“Rugby in Exeter is like hockey in Canada”: Red River Métis Citizen reflects on playing abroad



Red River Métis athlete Emily Tuttosi currently lives in England and plays with the Exeter Chiefs. The 27-year-old played for Team Canada in 2022. Photo credit: Exeter Chiefs.

From rural Manitoba, to England, to the Women’s Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, Red River Métis Citizen Emily Tuttosi has amassed an illustrious rugby career at an early age.

The 27-year-old athlete got her start in the game of rugby when she was around seven years old and credited her family members for getting her into the sport.

“I have an older brother who played rugby, and I also have a twin sister. We both loved being physical, aggressive, and active, so it was a natural sport to try,” she said. “It’s such a short season, especially when you’re that young. Every season you’d be so excited for it to come around and from there, I grew addicted to the game of rugby.”

Tuttosi played the game with the Souris Sabres until graduating high school in 2013, followed by five years with the University of Calgary Dinos. She experienced quite the transition in a move from a town of approximately 1,800 residents to a city boasting a population of around 1.3 million people.

“Coming from Souris, everyone knows everyone, and there’s a community feel,” she said, adding that getting placed into a city was a big change. “Thankfully, playing rugby at university also made me feel like part of a community – not the same as a town, but still as connected, which I think was helpful and allowed me to know rugby and know the university and then get to branch out.”

The rugby player discovered her Red River Métis roots five years ago after her grandfather did some digging and learned about his own ancestry. The Manitoba Métis Federation was able to help Tuttosi



Tuttosi prepares to power through a defender, on her former team, the Loughborough Lightning. Photo credit: Exeter Chiefs.

during her last year at university through the Post-Secondary Education Support Program.

Although she is still learning more about her Red River Métis heritage, Tuttosi believes the best way to demonstrate her Métis knowledge is to share what she’s learned.

“When people ask about my heritage, I tell them about Indigenous and Métis people in Canada and some of the history. Unfortunately, some of it is not so proud history, but then, the vibrant cultural identity of these groups is unknown to some,” she said. “Métis in the past have had to advocate for their group and their rights, and I think that is something I carry with me, whether it’s on the rugby pitch or for my teammates.”

After graduating from the University of Calgary, Tuttosi packed her bags and travelled to Loughborough, England, to play for the Loughborough Lightning in the Allianz Premier 15s – the top tier of the women’s English rugby union.

As rewarding as the journey has been, it didn’t come without challenges.

“That transition was interesting because rugby in Canada is played in the summer because we have seasons that are too extreme, and then (in England), it’s a winter sport. People think winter is cold here (in England), and for the most part, it’s still above zero degrees, and they can’t fathom the life I lived in Canada,” she said. “There were also little logistic things that you need to do. When you have a visa, and you make a move, that made me want to pull my hair out at times.”

Despite the challenges, Tuttosi said the transition has been “awesome”: “It has proved that the rugby community is somewhere I’m thankful to be, and it’s a place that I would love to keep making an impact for years to come,” she said.

Tuttosi spent one season with the Lightning before joining the Exeter Chiefs Women’s squad for their debut season in the Allianz Premier 15s in 2019. While playing for the Chiefs, she has been a mainstay of the team, appearing in 39 games, completing 13 tries, and garnering 65 total points.

The Chiefs call Sandy Park their home stadium, which boasts a capacity of 15,600. Tuttosi said it’s exciting to play there, especially on Saturdays.

“Rugby in Exeter is like hockey in Canada,” she said. “It’s cool that people are excited about it and have their tickets to come every week. It’s a dream I’m living that I never knew I could have five years ago.”

Tuttosi has noticed the popularity of women’s rugby explode during her time in England, and is ecstatic to be playing there.

“People are buying into the fact that we are skilled and athletic just as the men are, which is super inspiring. We get coached by a variety of coaches, and I get to play with athletes from different countries and different regions of England,” she said. “I feel like it’s such an opportunity to continually . . . learn about people’s culture and where their rugby path has taken them.”

The rugby star got her chance to shine again on the international stage, as she was one of 32 athletes selected to represent Canada in the Rugby World Cup

2021, hosted in New Zealand. The tournament took place in 2022 due to the pandemic.

She first represented Team Canada in 2017 for the senior Canadian women's team, and was delighted that her hard work paid off to be chosen again in 2021.

"I just kept telling myself that I'm going to work hard playing overseas, and I'm going to be the best rugby player I can be, and if that is good enough for the national team, that would be the goal," Tuttosi said. "To know that a lot of hours finally paid off and I am at the highest level of my sport is something I've dreamt about, thought about, and worked towards for so long. To finally be a part of that is a feeling I will cherish forever."

As an athlete, she said, you have dreams and goals of making a World Cup, and you think you have an idea of what it might feel like until you finally get to play in one.

"I think my idea was on the right track, but getting to play in front of a lot of people in another country that rugby is so huge in while getting to wear the Maple Leaf was incredible," she said.

Canada played in Group B of the World Cup, facing Japan, Italy, and the United States during group play. Team Canada went 3-0 during the round-robin and defeated the USA squad to punch their way into the semi-finals against England, where they would fall short with a 26-19 loss. The Canadian team would then lose to France in a match to determine third place.

"We placed fourth, so not the outcome we necessarily wanted, but we still got to showcase what Canadian women's rugby is. Before the tournament, a lot of people had doubts. They thought we were only big and physical athletes who couldn't be smart rugby players, and we got to prove them wrong," Tuttosi said. "During the final day at Eden Park, there were 43,000 fans for the first-place match. That made me super proud to be a female rugby player because it was (a lot of fans) fans supporting, loving, and backing the athletes in the tournament."

During the tournament, the rugby star scored six tries, including a hat trick against Japan, and was selected to the 2022 World Rugby Women's 15s Dream Team of the Year, a prestigious honour voted by a panel of international past players and coaches, World Rugby Hall of Fame inductees, and rugby media.

Now that the Rugby World Cup has concluded, Tuttosi has rejoined the Exeter Chiefs and discussed her upcoming goals.

"I hope I can perform, and our team (the Exeter Chiefs) can perform this year. We made it to the final last year, but we lost, and it would be awesome to



The Red River Métis athlete celebrates during a match against Italy in Langford, B.C. before the World Cup. Photo credit: Rugby Canada / Kevin Light.



Tuttosi looks for a pass during a game with the Exeter Chiefs. Photo credit: Exeter Chiefs.

win the Premiership," she said. "Then, on a more personal level, I hope I could represent Canada, and I would push to go to the next World Cup. The next World Cup is only three years away, because this past one was postponed a year due to COVID. If I could keep performing, pushing, training, and playing in (the World Cup) – because it's in England in 2025 – that would be unreal."

Red River Métis Citizens receive Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal



Red River Métis Citizen Melissa Brown was one of 1,000 Manitobans honoured with the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.



Frances Chartrand, Minister of Health and Early Learning Child Care and Vice-President of the Northwest Region, was another Red River Métis Citizen to receive the accolade.



Elder Barbara Bruce, pictured at an MMF event, also took the stage to receive the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.

One thousand Manitobans were selected to be honoured with the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.

The Manitoba Government has distributed medals to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the Throne. Ceremonies have been held throughout 2022 to hand out the medals and certificates.

Red River Métis Citizen Melissa Brown, who works with the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), was one

of many to take the podium on December 7, 2022 to receive the award.

"I felt honoured to receive it. I know there's a lot of great people in Manitoba and from my community that I work in St. Vital that received awards," she said. "It was nice to be honoured alongside them."

The award is given out to individuals who: are a resident of Manitoba or have a link to Manitoba; have contributed to Canada, Manitoba, or a particular region or community; and were alive during the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne.

Brown said she has been with the school division for around seven years.

"I started out doing family outreach in our division, connecting with families in some of our schools and providing extra support to them," she said. "From there, I've been a part of helping to establish and grow our programming for community members."

Now, Brown manages community programming for LRSD's René Deleurme Centre, a community learning centre located on St. Anne's Road.

"Essentially we do adult programming, adult services, and supports with the premise that when families do well, kids do well at school," she said.

Lieutenant Governor Anita Neville and Premier Heather Stefanson handed out the Queen's Platinum Jubilee medals during the ceremony.

Community Photo

Le Metis' Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Red River Métis Nation, send it to communications@mmf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!



Fourteen years ago, Minister Will Goodon won a five-year legal battle for Red River Métis harvesting rights in Manitoba, the province we brought into Confederation. The Goodon Decision helped chart a path toward recognition of our inherent rights of self-determination and self-government across our national homeland and beyond.

The nomination came from Jamie Moses, MLA for St. Vital, who approached Brown and asked her if she'd be interested in receiving the award.

She felt honoured to be one of a few Red River Métis Citizens to receive the award.

"I love my community and the work I do. That's why I'm here. It felt nice to be acknowledged for the work I'm doing alongside (other Red River Métis Citizens) in strengthening our community together," said Brown. "It's our community that's doing that work, and I'm just here to support them."

Other Red River Métis Citizens to receive the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal include: Frances Chartrand, Minister of Health and Early Learning Child Care, and Vice-President of the Northwest Region; and Elder Barbara Bruce.