

## **Carrie Bourassa's emailed response to CBC News**

I am deeply offended by anyone disputing my links to the Métis community. I am Métis and belong to the First Indigenous Riel Métis (F.I.R.M.) Local #33 Regina. I have been vetted through two other locals which are Riel Métis Council of Regina Inc. (RMCR). I obtained that membership on May 10/06 by Clifford LaRocque who was President at the time. I was also accepted into the Regina Riel Métis Council on July 29, 2013.

Just to be clear on my Métis identity. Here is my story: I was adopted by Clifford Larocque after my grandfather passed away. My grandfather and Clifford LaRocque knew each other and were friends in the war. I lived mostly with my grandfather just across from Scott Collegiate in Regina and Clifford's daughter Karen often babysat me. So it was no stretch for Clifford to adopt me and take care of me after my grandfather passed.

Our community knows who I am and embraces me. In our Metis ways, in the event of a loss, community members would adopt the individual who had no family and they would then automatically be seen as family. We see this as custom adoption. Those adoptions were more meaningful and have stronger bonds than colonial adoptions. Even though Clifford passed, those bonds are even deeper than death because the family has taken me as if I was their blood family. In turn, I serve the Metis community to the best of my ability.

As you are aware, there are many prominent Métis elders and scholars who do not have a Métis card for a variety of reasons. These are personal preferences which is why, we do not need a Métis Card to be Métis. It was not unusual that back in those days colonization contributed to the loss of birth certificates in fires, floods, damaged documents. In many cases these documents were never received due to our people not being born in hospitals and registered at the time of birth. Fires and floods damaged documents housed in churches and municipal offices. Our ancestors signed scrip and

other legal documents with an X. Scrip in itself was fraudulent and questionable in regards to its authenticity. The major method of record keeping that is being invalidated by the registry process is our oral tradition and history.

I have also been adopted into 5 other communities such as Rodger Ross, Gene Ouellette, Elder Mary Wilson, Elder Betty McKenna, Elder Ethel Dubois and these adoptions were done in ceremony and prayer and again, we follow those traditional ways. So I do my best for example with Elder Betty to follow Anishinaabe protocols and teachings and the same goes for Cree protocols and teachings.

With regard to the academic misconduct complaint at the University of Saskatchewan, please note that the matter was fully dismissed and determined to be unfounded with no opportunity for appeal.

Regarding your questions related to CIHR, please note that all requests from the media are sent to the CIHR Communications team. The team is responsible for providing support and coordinating interview requests for CIHR staff and Scientific Directors.

As for the draft letter of support that was written. Each member of the Institute Advisory Board had the opportunity to be included or not in that letter. I was not involved in those discussions.

Finally, I hope that you will use the information above to tell my story, the real story. I also invite you to take this opportunity to promote all the work being done across the country to improve the lives and well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples in Canada. Details on the progress of CIHR's Indigenous research activities are highlighted in our latest [Progress Update – Action Plan: Building a healthier future for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples](#). Please note that I'm co-leading the Action Plan.

I also encourage you to look at the Morning Star Lodge website as we serve Indigenous communities at their direction and self-determination. This [is] in alignment with the Métis ways to serve our communities.

<https://www.indigenoushealthlab.com/>

Miigwetch/thank you

Dr. Carrie Bourassa