

## GONAEWO OUR WAY OF LIFE



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# The people we meet

We have all been in the presence of or met people within the span of our lives and in the North, space does not always allow for constant contact, except for a brief moment when an event is announced and a name is mentioned. As a student during my brief stay at Akaitcho Hall in 1972-73, I had an opportunity to be in the same class with Nancy Karetak-Lindell at Sir John Franklin High School. That was it, until it was announced that she got elected as MP to what is now Nunavut in 1997.

I started working on the Tlicho Agreement in 1992, and like all good things, it came to an end. The last hurdle was to get the agreement through Parliament to be entrenched into the highest law in Canada.

This meant a lot of lobbying and meeting as many lawmakers as possible, Nancy being one of them and I got to know her more in that brief moment than any other time, and I realized how important it was to congratulate one another for the steps we take in facing our challenges.

I was not surprised when I heard that Nancy was named director of the Arctic Voices Fellowships, a new and innovative program initiated by the Gordon Foundation. The program will encourage and support youth to engage in projects to learn policy development that reflects life in the North. The future really belongs to the next generation and for them to engage in the communication of simply putting their minds and energy together into a collective thought process.

The North is ever a changing place, not only for the way of life, but by issues such as climate change, governance and resource development. We need a future based on our own visions without having to be dictated from a far away place on how we should proceed.

With all the experiences we have gained in our wanderings through life, some are good and some questionable, but the need to share is strong. I heard an elder say that he has heard many things in his life and the information absorbed eventually aches to get out and the only relief is to express it.

The new generation has an opportunity without trial and tribulations of previous generations. Through mentoring they could direct their future by exploring and experiencing the process of developing homegrown policy based on our heritage and culture of the North.

We need to congratulate organizations such as the Gordon Foundation and partners that see the Northern potential through our youth. By engaging, they help create opportunities by committing funds to make it a reality.

I congratulate Nancy, who has taken up the challenge, as a true Northerner, to continue to help shape the North through our future generation.