

Viola Ann Thomas ren skwekwst

Who is she?

Viola is the granddaughter of Andy and Faustine Manuel and Alex and Lucy Thomas. She is the daughter of Mary Louise Thomas and Lawrence Thomas.

She has 15 siblings and is blessed to be an aunt and great aunt to many nieces and nephews.

A Tk'emlupsemc residential school survivor, Ola has spent 30 years of her life to advance the rights of Indigenous peoples in many capacities over the years on a regional and national level.

She was bestowed with her spirit name "Anemki Wedom" by Elder Josephine Mandamin (Wiwemikong on Manitoulin Island, Ontario) who said, "I give you this name spirit name Anemki Wedom, meaning Thundering Spirit Voice, as I have had a vision of you leading the people, with your powerful voice, wisdom and heart".

Achievements/Successes

First Indigenous woman elected as National President for the National Association of Indian Friendship Centres

First Indigenous woman elected President of United Native Nations Society of British Columbia

First Indigenous woman to be elected President of Rural Remote BC Native Housing Authority

Played key role nationally for the Residential School Commission to bring forth public awareness and participation as a unite front by all Canadians and Indigenous people

Instrumental at the Supreme Court level in the "Baby Ishmael" case on the rights affecting access by grandparents.

Played a key role to ensure media coverage and public awareness about the murder and missing Aboriginal women in Canada.

Awarded recognition from Indigenous Bar Association for her role in developing the National Anti-Racism Symposium in Montreal, Quebec.

Received award for contributions she made in Community Development on behalf of Indigenous peoples from Extra Newspaper, Vancouver BC

Founding member for development of Northern Native Broadcasting Society Terrace BC

Award recognition by Native Women's Summit Hazelton British Columbia for contributions to advance Indigenous women and young Indigenous women

Set a precedent with Workers Compensation Board for recognition of "post- traumatic stress" with the William Blackwater case.

Experience

Seven Years working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Ottawa; past year with Reconciliation Canada based out of B.C.

Over 14 years of experience of working in a variety of roles within the Federal Government of Canada

This includes working in a advisory capacity in the following areas: Policy Development and Analysis; Intergovernmental Affairs; Project Management; Public Relations and Program Development ; and Public Legal Education advocacy

Worked with City of Vancouver as a Cultural and Education Programmer

Previous Public Legal Education Program Officer with BC Legal Services Society Native Programs

Paralegal worker Aboriginal Justice Centre Vancouver focusing on Poverty Law

Education

Diploma in Aboriginal, Environmental, Labour Studies Northwest Community College Terrace, BC

Queens University various certificates in Management Practices

Certificate in Traditional Governance Banff Centre Management, Alberta

Certificate in Crisis Counselling Northwest Community College

Career Advancement Program for Directors/Managers Federal Government of Canada

Enowkin International School Writing, Penticton, BC

Volunteered with a variety of not-for-profit organizations including:

Current YWCA of Canada, National Advocacy Advisory Committee Member (*Currently* Toronto)

Past Executive member of Quebec Native Women's Association; Healing Our Spirit Aids Society; Downtown Eastside Women's Centre; Advisor Vancouver Sun Diversity Committee; Congress of Aboriginal People; BC Native Communications Society.

Vision

Fairness, Equality and Justice for everyone is central to Viola's values in ethical leadership.

Guided by these central principles of honesty, love, humility, courage, truth, wisdom, and kindness she derives her true conviction that *Our Indigenous Rights are Human Rights.*

She believes clean water, housing, food, security, education and access to proper health care are paramount supports and basic human rights that “our membership deserves and nothing less!”

Restoring meaningful input from the people is important to her in order to prioritize sustainable community development that will benefit the community as a whole.

Creating space at the table for youth engagement to sustain language and cultural rejuvenation is vital for future leadership development.

X

Viola Ann Thomas For Councillor



Viola with Justice Murray Sinclair Truth and Reconciliation Community Hearing 2014

FAIRNESS, EQUALITY & JUSTICE FOR ALL