

EXERCISING YOUR RIGHTS IS ACTION!!

**VOTE
VIOLA THOMAS
FOR COUNCILLOR**



“Every vote HAS to be earned”

As a proud band member, born and raised in Tk'emlups Te Secwepemc, Viola Thomas is the daughter of Louise and Lawrence Thomas and granddaughter of Faustine and Andy Manuel and Lucy and Alex Thomas.

She has lived and worked across Turtle Island in various management and leadership roles. She has a vast working knowledge in governmental affairs

at the executive level in both federal and provincial governments.

Her spirit name 'Anemki Wedom' translates to 'Thundering Spirit Voice' and was bestowed upon her by Elder Josephine Mandamin, Water Walk Grandmother.

Viola is a past member of the Tk'emlups Council and has firsthand experience with the increasing demands of leadership. She knows that building trust and listening to the membership is fundamental to moving forward.

She strongly believes in self-determination and self-governance and will ensure that proper consultation with the community is a priority. Membership needs to be consulted to ensure that what's being done at the leadership level is what they actually want and need. An informed community in Viola's view is an ingredient to success.

Viola believes that a strategy must be developed to address pollution in the industrial park and leased lands.

She views conservation as one of the keys to fight negative climate change. "I feel very strongly that conservation is something everyone can participate in. Stakeholders who have invested in the area and our community must respect our Mother Earth when considering environmental impacts and feasibility of any future economic development."

She believes that unrepresented band members must be listened to, to adequately address deterred environmental issues and other initiatives.

Viola's philosophy: 'Everyone's voice should be respected, as everyone has a gift to add to the strength of the community circle.'

"Members of our Day Scholars Class Action settlement are proof that no one walks the path alone, together, each and everyone's experience and voice has added to a legacy of hope and understanding. Sometimes that is all we have is—OUR VOICE—let us continue to use it in a positive way."

Viola would advocate for a space at the table for a Youth Council. By encouraging and mentoring the Youth, it would open the door for many opportunities. She also believes that more advocacy and resources are needed for Elder's programs and services.

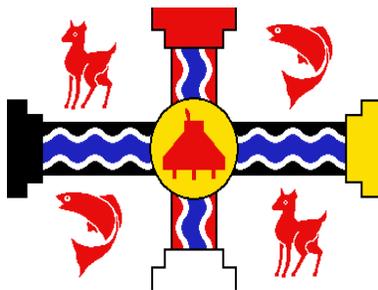
Viola believes that addressing health issues are key to the well-being of membership and the future. “With forward thinking leadership, together we can govern our nation during times of uncertainty and change, such as those we face today.” Positive change is paramount, and Viola understands the complexity of issues that have arisen, along with the impact of the pandemic. She has witnessed the effects on the community and the associated struggles. Her goal is to support and enhance services, specifically in recruitment, training and advocacy.

To address the opioid crisis, she hopes Tk’emlups can learn from the success stories of other First Nation communities. “Statistics show we can’t ignore the realities of an imbalance, that effects all of us.” She believes it will take ‘political will’ to address growing community concerns, such as residency by-laws and the need to empower police service.

Viola dedicates a lot of her time to advance Indigenous Human Rights, particularly as it relates to Indigenous girls and women. She stays informed and involved on many issues.

As a Residential School survivor, she has had input and a ‘bird’s eye view’ working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. She has assisted other survivors in exposing horrendous personal violations while attending these schools.

Viola was invited as an expert witness to testify for Canada’s National Inquiry on Murdered and Missing Women and played a vital role on the LGBTQ2 National Advisory committee for the inquiry.



“Our story needs to be told and represented”, she says, and her plan is to promote the history of her Nation and have it included in cultural and historic monuments.

“In terms of economic growth, we need more transparency with fiscal management. Band members need to understand where and how the money flows.”

Her strategies for a better future include successive planning in fiscal management, and to prioritize sustainable community development that fosters employment, education and mentorship. She would advocate for a ‘stand alone finance committee’ with the intent to combine band members’ interest with investors and stakeholders, while utilizing their expert knowledge.

Her vision includes Working Committees—designed as Task Forces with structured guidance, that utilizes community expertise and mentorship. “Let’s be proactive” says Thomas.



Past experience and Volunteer work

Viola has served and worked in a voluntary capacity for many feminist and Indigenous not-for-profit organizations. She has held key leadership roles:

President of National Association of Friendship Centers; President of United Native Nations; President of Healing Our Spirit Aids Society; Executive Member for Quebec Native Women; Board Member Ontario Native Women’s Association; BC Native Rural Housing Corporation, Board member Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre; Advisory Committee Member YWCA; Councillor for Tk’emlups Te Secwepemc; Board member Native Court Workers.

Presently, she is a member for the Coalition for MMIWG2S Union of BC Indian Chiefs, City of Vancouver Advisory Committee; Elected Board member for not-for-profit organizations Inter Pares and Board member Protecting of Sisters Society.



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