

Citation read on the occasion of the granting of the degree of

Honorary Doctor of Laws to

Frank Parnell

by the Senate of the University of Victoria

June 17, 2016

Madam Chancellor, it is my privilege to introduce Frank Anthony Parnell, Haida citizen, economic visionary, and cultural paladin.

Frank Parnell is perhaps best known as the co-founder and long-time CEO of TRICORP; the Tribal Resources Investment Corporation. In founding TRICORP he had a vision to enhance the prosperity of First Nations' people through economic independence, economic capacity building, and economic development. He saw strength in unity, and through strength of character was instrumental in uniting the Kitkatla-Metlakatla, Nisga'a-Lisims, Haida, and Gitks'an Wet'suwet'en nations to share his vision. Frank Parnell is persuasive and tenacious. Twenty-four years ago, he used these attributes to help secure the initial pooled funding that made TRICORP possible. Today, TRICORP is a self-sustaining champion of innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development, providing more than \$28 million in financing to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. But, Frank Parnell's legacy at TRICORP does not solely rest in the money invested, the infrastructure built, the people trained, or the jobs created – and these are substantial; his legacy is the social impact of successful economic self-determination. He has instilled hope in people where many had lost hope. He helped provide the tools and means through which a brighter future may be forged. And through effective mentorship, he has supported the foundation of the next generation of Aboriginal leaders, many of whom are here today.

Frank Parnell is a tireless supporter, advocate, champion, and defender of First Nations' culture. In 1985 he helped establish, and was past Chairman of, the Gwaii Trust Society. This society invests in social, cultural, and economic projects aimed at nation building; fostering and improving Haida quality of life. Frank Parnell currently serves on the board of CFNR radio and he was instrumental in keeping that radio station operating, indeed making it profitable, so that it can reach and connect people, businesses, and organizations throughout Northern British Columbia. Since 1980 he has had a senior leadership role in the All Natives Basketball Tournament; an event that creates social, cultural, and economic ties by attracting 60 community-based and community supported teams from across the North. These are just a few of the activities Frank Parnell has initiated, lead, or supported that foster and celebrate First Nations' culture.

People who have worked with Frank Parnell describe him as being driven, shrewd, and persistent, but also approachable, caring, and humble. His passionate advocacy for his people

underlies his motivations. He is a person with a vision for what needs to be done, and he is a person who gets things done. He has a unique ability to recognize and support talent; putting people into the right places to help them fully develop their potential. Perhaps above all, he is immensely respected.

Madam Chancellor, it is my honour to present Frank Anthony Parnell for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

Written and presented by
Dr. Brock Smith, Professor
Faculty of Business
University of Victoria