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## Social Work project to shed light on Canada's untold Métis story

*Multi-faceted project to serve as a learning tool advancing reconciliation, celebrating resilience.*

***Lii Michif Niyannan*** meaning ***We Are Métis*** is the title of an upcoming documentary film and Social Work curricula development project funded in part by the Canadian Heritage Anti-Racism Action Project. This funding was created by the Government of Canada to help address barriers to employment, justice and social participation among Indigenous Peoples, racialized communities and religious minorities.

The project will be led by Jeannine Carriere, a professor and accomplished researcher with the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria for the past 15 years. Award-winning Métis filmmaker and professor Emeritus in Gender Studies, Christine Welsh, is co-producer for the film and co-lead on this important endeavor.

Highly accomplished Social Work graduate student, Trish Pal, has also agreed to work on the project as a research assistant. Pal is a Two-Spirit Metis person who won the Dean's Award for Indigenous Graduate Students along with a faculty academic achievement award.

The ***Lii Michif Niyannan*** multi-media project aims to engage Métis and non-Métis Canadians in a dialogue and shared learning experience, says Carriere. "We will encourage people to explore the profound historic contributions of Métis people in shaping our country alongside the contemporary Métis experiences of today."

Carriere is Métis, born and raised within the historic Red River area of Manitoba. This project is based on her scholarly research and a long-held vision to heighten understanding of the distinct, historic Métis nationhood that shaped Canada's Northwest from the 1700s onward alongside contemporary perspectives on what it means to be Métis today.

By facilitating and documenting thoughtful dialogue in high schools, colleges, universities and community centres, Carriere and Welsh aim to bridge today's knowledge gap of the Métis way, the people, history, culture, the Michif language, and the thriving Métis territory that prospered long before Confederation.

Carriere and Welsh have designed their multi-faceted project as a tool for reconciliation and resilience. Project development activities will take place primarily in the western provinces while the knowledge mobilization, engagement activities and project outcomes will be shared across Canada. Filming is slated to begin in the summer of 2020.

**For more information, please contact:**

Jeannine Carriere -UVic School of Social Work

E - [carriere@uvic.ca](mailto:carriere@uvic.ca) P - [250-721-6452](tel:250-721-6452)



**Jeannine Carriere, Professor**

**School of Social Work, University of Victoria (left)**

Jeannine Carriere has been teaching Indigenous specialization programs with UVic's School of Social Work since 2005. Previously, she taught with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. Carriere has served as a practitioner for more than 35 years in Aboriginal child and family services and has conducted several research projects related to Métis child and family wellness, Indigenous adoptions and identity, and advancing Indigenous knowledges. Author of several publications, her most recent book is titled *Calling Our Families Home: Métis Peoples' Experience with Child Welfare*, co-edited with Catherine Richardson and launched in 2017 by J. Charlton Publishing. That same year, Carriere received the University of Victoria Provost's Advocacy and Activism Award for her child welfare and community work with Métis and First Nations peoples.

**Christine Welsh, Associate Professor Emerita**

**Department of Gender Studies, University of Victoria (right)**

Christine Welsh is an award-winning documentary filmmaker best known for the film *Finding Dawn* (2006), produced by the National Film Board, which remains one of the earliest calls to action on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. Her 1995 film *Kuper Island: Return to the Healing Circle* with Peter C. Campbell featured some of the first public testimony from survivors of Canada's Indian residential school system and is now part of the permanent archive of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Welsh's films have been broadcast nationally on CBC, CTV and APTN, and have been featured at major film festivals in Canada, the U.S., France, Australia and New Zealand, as well as at the 51st United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York. She has spoken widely and published a number of articles in Canadian Literature, Descant, Feminism in Cinema and Screening Culture: Constructing Image and Identity. In 2008, she received the Women in Film and Television Vancouver Artistic Achievement Award for filmmaking excellence in telling women's stories.