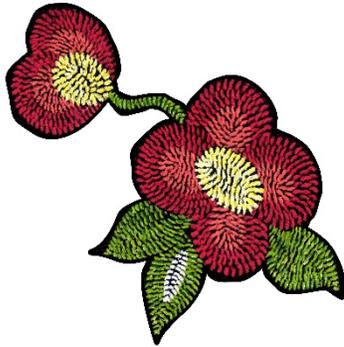


# The Verna J Kirkness Education Foundation



## PRESS RELEASE: DeDe DeRose joins the Verna J Kirkness Education Foundation Board of Directors.

April 2, 2019, Vancouver, BC, Canada

The Verna J Kirkness Education Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of DeDe DeRose, BEd '81, MEd '93, to the Foundation Board of Directors. DeDe was British Columbia's first Superintendent of Aboriginal Achievement, and is a prominent advocate for Aboriginal student success.

Born in Williams Lake to a Secwepempc family and as a member of the Esketemc First Nation, DeRose graduated from UBC's Indigenous Teacher's Education Program (NITEP) with a Bachelor of Education in 1981. She also earned a Diploma in Education in 1990, and completed the UBC Ts'kel Master's Program in 1993. DeRose taught in the Cariboo Chilcotin School District for nine years, and then served as principal for various elementary schools in the Kamloops/Thompson School District for nearly two decades.

During her career as an educator, DeRose advocated for the inclusion of Aboriginal languages, history, and culture in the school curriculum. A community organizer, she sought the genuine involvement of parents, caregivers, and local communities in her schools. She served as the first Aboriginal educator at the former BC College of Teachers for over eight years, and has chaired and co-chaired the First Nations Education Council at UBC for 13 years. In 2005, DeRose was awarded the inaugural

Teacher Educator Award from the Association of BC Deans of Education for her work in supporting and promoting teacher education at the school level.

In 2012, DeRose was appointed to the BC Ministry of Education as the first ever Superintendent of Aboriginal Achievement. The position was created to improve the rates of high-school graduation for Aboriginal youth, which is on average 30% lower than non-Aboriginal students.

### **About the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation**

The Foundation was established in 2008 with the primary goals to increase the number of First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) students graduating in science, engineering and medicine to develop young role models who will influence other students to complete Grade 12 and pursue post-secondary studies. It achieves these goals by bringing Grade 11 FNMI students to a University campus for one week where they live in residence, meet with Elders at Aboriginal student centres, and do independent research with faculty mentors and their research groups.

The Foundation's namesake, Dr. Verna J. Kirkness, has been a leader in the field of Indigenous education since the 1950s. Her active involvement in the Program has been a major factor in its growth and success. To date, over 400 FNMI students have completed the Verna J. Kirkness Science and Engineering Education Program and are proud to be recognized as Kirkness scholars.

The Program started at the University of Manitoba in 2008 and expanded to include the University of Saskatchewan in 2014 and UBC in 2015. In 2019, the Program will be offered at those Universities and six additional Universities: Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the University of Victoria, the First Nations University of Canada, the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, and the University of Ottawa. A total of 150 students will be accepted into the Program in 2019.

For more information about the Foundation please visit <http://www.vernakirkness.org/> or contact Dr. Jocelyne Robinson, Program Director, [jocelyne.robinson@vernajkirkness.org](mailto:jocelyne.robinson@vernajkirkness.org).

For information about supporting the Foundation please contact Tony C.L. Williams, Chair of the Board of Directors [tony.williams@vernajkirkness.org](mailto:tony.williams@vernajkirkness.org).