

Brief History of the Foundation:

The Foundation was founded in 2008 by Ron Woznow and Susan O'Brien and was originally named the Family Food Research Foundation. It is a registered Canadian charity. Its goal was to increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students graduating from post secondary science programs.

In 2008, Dr. Woznow was the CEO of the Advanced Food and Material Network (AFMNet). In 2008, 2009 and 2010 the Foundation received seed funding from AFMNet. The first program was started in 2009 and was called the "Be a Food Researcher for a Week" which provided an opportunity for students to spend a week on campus learning about food research and the support that was available to them if they did post secondary studies. This program was modeled after the "Be a Genetic Researcher for a Week" program which Dr. Woznow started in 2001 while he was the CEO of the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network.

In 2010, Dr. Eموke Szathmary, the past president of the University of Manitoba, introduced Ron to Dr. Verna Kirkness who was widely regarded as the leading Indigenous educator in Canada. She was supportive of foundation's goal and agreed to lend her name to the foundation which was renamed the Verna J. Kirkness Education Foundation. In 2013, the Foundation expanded the scientific scope of its program to include research in both science and engineering and renamed the program the "Verna J. Kirkness Science and Engineering Education Program".

From 2012-2014, the Program was offered at the University of Manitoba. In 2015, a Program was added at the University of Saskatchewan and in 2016 at the University of British Columbia. In 2018, the Program expanded to the University of Calgary, First Nations University of Canada and the University of Ottawa. In 2019, Programs were added at the University of Victoria and University of Alberta bringing the number of programs to 8. 130 students from across Canada attended the 2019 Programs and were mentored by 53 Professors and their research associates.

For more information about the Foundation please visit <http://www.vernakirkness.org/> or contact Dr. Ron Woznow, Executive Director, ron.woznow@vernajkirkness.org.

For information about supporting the Foundation please contact Tony C.L. Williams, Chair of the Board of Directors tony.williams@vernajkirkness.org.