In Brief

Treaties Today
Aboriginal governance researcher describes historical documents as tools for change

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS

A framed black-and-white photograph of three young girls sits on a shelf in Kiera Ladner's office, next to scores of books about Canadian politics. The photo of the girls, cuddled in close, one of them clutching a doll, is special to the political studies professor for a few reasons: not only are the smiling youngsters her adored nieces, they represent the future.

"When I think about why I do what I do, I think about those coming generations," says Ladner.

Ladner said her efforts are futile if her research doesn't "make sense to everyday people in the community. Soon, she'll invite a few young Aboriginal youth from across the province to the university. Not only will she get these young people involved in her research, she'll introduce them to post-secondary education. And before long, she'll have a physical space where she can make this happen.

Ladner recently received funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Manitoba Research and Innovation Fund to establish a research centre called Mamawipawin (Cree for gathering place) on the fourth floor of the tabler Building. The space will have an adjacent lab to record interviews and house a digital archive.

Hawaii

Ladner's quest for knowledge also extends south of the border to Indigenous Peoples in Hawaii, which was illegally occupied by the United States in 1887. Ladner said the move had similar negative affects on the Aboriginal population there as it has here. She has been working with Indigenous Hawaiians who have been actively reclaiming their culture, language and control over their land during the last four decades.

"Some of the lessons I'm learning there are things I would like to bring back here," she says.

Ladner acknowledges that change doesn't happen overnight but she is determined to contribute in some way if relations don't improve, she fears there will be more resistance similar to the Oka Crisis in 1990 when the Quebec town tried to build a golf course on Aboriginal burial ground land to the dismay of the Mohawk nation.

"If we don't work on both sides of the problem, I see another Oka -- but something far more catastrophic and far greater, if we can manage to rebuild, to fully engage in reconciliation, I see a Canada based on the treaties," Ladner says.

Ladner's quest is not always easy, as the Mohawk people are still in the midst of a "disheartening" for the Mohawk people treaty crisis, which is facing off with military ever again," she says. "But the reality is: that's what's going to happen if something doesn't change, and what is Canada going to do? Either we start to engage in these issues now and learn now or we face each other at a blockade."

The photo of the girls, cuddled in close, one of them clutching a doll, is special to the political studies professor for a few reasons: not only are the smiling youngsters her adored nieces, they represent the future.

Treaties Today
Aboriginal governance researcher describes historical documents as tools for change

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS

A framed black-and-white photograph of three young girls sits on a shelf in Kiera Ladner's office, next to scores of books about Canadian politics. The photo of the girls, cuddled in close, one of them clutching a doll, is special to the political studies professor for a few reasons: not only are the smiling youngsters her adored nieces, they represent the future.

"When I think about why I do what I do, I think about those coming generations," says Ladner.

Ladner said her efforts are futile if her research doesn't "make sense to everyday people in the community. Soon, she'll invite a few young Aboriginal youth from across the province to the university. Not only will she get these young people involved in her research, she'll introduce them to post-secondary education. And before long, she'll have a physical space where she can make this happen.

Ladner recently received funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Manitoba Research and Innovation Fund to establish a research centre called Mamawipawin (Cree for gathering place) on the fourth floor of the tabler Building. The space will have an adjacent lab to record interviews and house a digital archive.

Hawaiians

Ladner's quest for knowledge also extends south of the border to Indigenous Peoples in Hawaii, which was illegally occupied by the United States in 1887. Ladner said the move had similar negative affects on the Aboriginal population there as it has here. She has been working with Indigenous Hawaiians who have been actively reclaiming their culture, language and control over their land during the last four decades.

"Some of the lessons I'm learning there are things I would like to bring back here," she says.

Ladner acknowledges that change doesn't happen overnight but she is determined to contribute in some way if relations don't improve, she fears there will be more resistance similar to the Oka Crisis in 1990 when the Quebec town tried to build a golf course on Aboriginal burial ground land to the dismay of the Mohawk nation.

"If we don't work on both sides of the problem, I see another Oka -- but something far more catastrophic and far greater, if we can manage to rebuild, to fully engage in reconciliation, I see a Canada based on the treaties," Ladner says.

Ladner's quest is not always easy, as the Mohawk people are still in the midst of a "disheartening" for the Mohawk people treaty crisis, which is facing off with military ever again," she says. "But the reality is: that's what's going to happen if something doesn't change, and what is Canada going to do? Either we start to engage in these issues now and learn now or we face each other at a blockade."

To learn more, come to a free public presentation by Ladner called 'We are all Treaty People: Governing in Accordance with the Treaties' Nov 18 at 7 p.m. in the Education Building, Room 250.