



ONTARIO NATIVE
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

March 4, 2011

RE: ONWA'S PRESIDENT, DR. DAWN (MEMEE) HARVARD – GRANTED PH.D

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ONTARIO – Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is pleased to announce that its President, Dr. Dawn (Meme) Harvard Ph.D successfully defended her doctoral Dissertation today. Dr. Harvard Ph.D received the good news earlier today from Goli Rezai-Rashti, Ph.D and Associate Professor Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario.

In addition to her academic studies, Dawn has been active as ONWA's President; Vice President of the Native Women's Association of Canada; and President for the Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative. Her work has been published and she is the co-editor of *"Until Our hearts Are On the Ground: Aboriginal Mothering, Oppression, Resistance, and Rebirth."* Demeter Press: Toronto. 2006. Dawn is the first aboriginal recipient of a Trudeau scholarship and more importantly she is a wife and the mother of three young daughters.

The title of Dr. Harvard's thesis is " The Power of Silence and the Price of Success: Academic Achievement as Transformational Resistance for Aboriginal Women". Her research addresses the epidemic of low academic achievement and high dropout rates among Aboriginal populations in Canada. In examining the experiences of those few Aboriginal people who have successfully completed post-secondary education, she seeks to help define appropriate directions for educational restructuring. This work represents a new approach to the topic, as most work to date focused on the deficits, disadvantages and failures of Aboriginal students.

"Dawn is committed to breaking cycles of poverty in Aboriginal communities and assuring a better future for Aboriginal children in Canadian society through culturally appropriate educational reforms and culturally sensitive support mechanisms," says ONWA Executive Director, Betty Kennedy. She continues, "We are extremely proud of her academic achievements and honoured to have Dawn lead our organization. She is a great example to our young women who seek positive Aboriginal role models... she began as a youth in our organization and now she is President. It is our hope that as a positive role model along with her ongoing research she will continue to empower Aboriginal women and girls."

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is a not for profit organization that empowers and supports Aboriginal women and their families in the province of Ontario.

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