

Bob Watts – Reconciliation Practitioner

Robert (Bob) Watts is a much sought after expert in Indigenous policy, negotiations, training and conflict resolution.

He is the former Interim Executive Director of the Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which examined and made recommendations regarding the Indian Residential School era and its legacy. Bob led the process, supported by an excellent team and many organizations from across Canada and internationally, to create the policies and processes in order to firmly establish the Commission.



Bob also served as the Chief of Staff to the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine, where he was a member of the team that negotiated the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class action settlement in Canada's history.

His public service includes Assistant Deputy Minister for the Government of Canada and Senior Executive in Ontario. Bob is a graduate of the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University and Fellow at the Harvard Law School where he researched and lectured on the role culture plays in conflict. Bob has had the benefit of excellent Indigenous mentorship and western learning which allows him to work well in both worlds. Some of his Indigenous learning has focused on medicine plants, traditional songs, traditional environmental knowledge and leadership. Bob has led the negotiations of co-management agreements, helped build strong corporate partnerships and has lead processes focused on strategic plans and community development.

In 2019 Bob served as Chief of Staff to National Chief Perry Bellegarde and played a key role in historic budget allocations and the passage of Bills C-91 and 92. Currently, Bob is the Vice President of Indigenous Relations at the NWMO and an Adjunct Professor and Distinguished Fellow at Queen's University, Kingston Ontario where he developed one the first graduate level courses on Reconciliation in the country.

Bob is a Board Member with the Consensus Building Institute, Cambridge MA and with the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council. He is also the Chair of the Downie-Wenjack Fund and Chair of Reconciliation Canada. Bob is a recipient of the Inspire Award for Public Service and recently received an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from McMaster University. He has taught, debated and lectured at a number of universities in Canada and the United States.

He is from the Mohawk and Ojibway Nations and resides at Six Nations Reserve, Ontario. Bob carries and honours his Ojibwe Spirit Name, Kinoozishingwak (Tall Pine) and is a member of the Bear Clan.