

Panelist Biographies

Max Faille, Partner, Gowlings

Max Faille is a partner in Gowlings' Ottawa office, practicing in Aboriginal law, public law and general litigation. Max currently serves as national leader of Gowlings' Aboriginal Law Group and co-leader of Gowlings' Aboriginal Tax Service. His clients consist of several First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada, as well as private sector interests seeking to do business with Aboriginal communities. In addition to legal representation in the courts and in negotiations, Max regularly provides advice on matters of Aboriginal and treaty rights, First Nation taxation, self-government, Aboriginal consultation and accommodation, Impact and Benefit Agreements, and Aboriginal economic development. His advocacy includes representing clients before the Ontario Superior Court and Divisional Court, the Ontario Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, the Court of Appeal for the Northwest Territories, the Yukon Supreme Court, the Federal Court of Canada, the Federal Court of Appeal, the Tax Court of Canada and the Supreme Court of Canada.

Max is frequently invited to present to or chair major national legal conferences in Aboriginal Law on such topics as Aboriginal consultation and accommodation, First Nation taxation, Aboriginal economic development, and Impact Benefit Agreements.

Gary Lipinski, Chair, Métis Nation of Ontario

Gary Lipinski was born and raised in Fort Frances, Ontario. As a descendant of the only Métis collective in Canada to negotiate a Métis adhesion to an historic treaty (the Halfbreed Addendum to Treaty #3), he comes from a long line of Métis commercial fisherman and traditional resource users in north-western Ontario. Today, Gary continues to live in Fort Frances with his wife Dianne and daughter Rachel.

Career Background

Initially a teacher by trade for over a decade, Gary's career in Métis politics began in 1994 as an elected Councillor for the Sunset Country Métis, a Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Community Council which represents Métis citizens in Fort Frances (Rainy Lake/Rainy River) area. Benefitting from this experience, Gary went on to become the Regional Councillor for north-western Ontario (MNO Region One) on the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO). In 1999 in his first province-wide election, Gary was elected to the MNO Executive as Chair of the PCMNO. Re-elected to this position twice he served as MNO Chair for a total of nine years before being elected MNO President in May 2008.

As MNO Chair, Gary was an instrumental part of the leadership team that advanced *R. v. Powley* – the ground-breaking Métis rights litigation that affirmed in the Supreme Court of Canada that Métis are full-fledged rights-bearing people and that Métis communities have constitutionally-protected rights. He also acted as Chief Negotiator during MNO's negotiations with the Ontario Government in order to implement the Powley decision. These negotiations ultimately resulted in an agreement on Métis harvesting rights being reached between the former MNO President and the Ontario Minister for Natural Resources in July 2004. Today, this negotiated agreement remains the only one of its kind in Canada.

Leadership Priorities and Achievements

Since being elected MNO President, Gary and his leadership team have focused on four key priorities to advance the Métis agenda in Ontario. These include: (1) continuing to advance Métis rights; (2) promoting Métis pride, identity and culture; (3) supporting Métis individuals, families and communities; and (4) strengthening the MNO's financial management and accountability. Successes in these areas have been achieved by building strategic relationships with other governments, industry, First Nations and stakeholders as well as creating opportunities for Ontario Métis to continue to work together in order to build a stronger Métis Nation.

Stephen Lindley Vice President, Aboriginal & Northern Affairs, SNC-Lavalin Inc.

Steve Lindley is corporate Vice President responsible for Aboriginal & Northern Affairs for SNC-Lavalin Inc., one of the world's leading engineering and construction firms. Steve is responsible for developing and maintaining corporate relations and partnerships with aboriginal organizations and businesses throughout Canada, conducting business development and marketing and providing project support to all Divisions of the Company. Stephen is currently a member of the Board of Directors of three aboriginal-owned joint venture companies, of which SNC-Lavalin is a minority shareholder. He is also a Director in the SNC-Lavalin Environment Division and an Adjunct Professor in the University of Toronto Civil Engineering Program.