

## **NVIT Board Member Biographies**

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### **Joseph (Joe) Bevan**

Joe Bevan is the CEO of Gitga'at Economic Development Corporation. Previously Mr. Bevan was the Senior Consultant of Humanity Financial Management Inc, a Capacity Development Manager for the First Nations Financial Management Board and was Chief Negotiator for Kitselas First Nation. Active in his community, he was Chair of the First Nations Major Projects Coalition and First Nations Finance Authority. Mr. Bevan also was a Director for First Nations LNG Alliance. He holds an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Coast Mountain College.

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### **Sharon Bond**

Sharon is a seasoned leader in Indigenous tourism and with almost two decades of experience in the industry, she brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table.

Her career in tourism began in 2009 when she founded Kekuli Aboriginal Foods, a company dedicated to promoting Indigenous cuisine and culture. As CEO, Sharon oversaw all aspects of the business, from marketing and sales to operations and finance. Sharon also has a strong background in marketing, strategy building, and project management. She earned her MBA from Simon Fraser University and has applied those skills to various projects and initiatives in and outside the tourism industry.

Sharon has served on the board of directors for several organizations, including the Indigenous Tourism Association of BC and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association. She is also involved in various community initiatives, such as fundraising for local charities and mentoring women and youth in business entrepreneurship. Sharon is passionate about promoting Indigenous culture and supporting economic development in Indigenous communities.

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### **Shane Coutlee**

Shane, a proud member of the Lower Nicola Indian Band, has extensive experience in both private and public industry. Shane's direct experience with Governing Boards, Chief and Councils, School Districts, and Provincial/Federal Governments over the past 20 years are where his skill-sets are considered valuable assets to those Shane serves. Equipped with a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, a Bachelor of Education Degree, and years of leadership experience in BC Public Education, First Nation Band/Organizations, and Human Service Sectors Shane has contributed towards both the successful outcomes and self-sufficient futures for Indigenous People. Building trusting relationships and maintaining holistic connections are assets Shane holds for creating strategic implementation plans with individuals, businesses, organizations, and communities throughout the Province of BC.

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### **Carla George**

Kwitelut, Kwelaw'ikw, Xa'nusamega, Carla Rose George is a proud woman of Skwxwu7mesh and Kwakiutl ancestry. Ms. George is serving her 4th term as Elected Councillor at Squamish Nation. She also was Cultural Worker and Nexwiniwnitway Facilitator/Coordinator of Alternative Dispute Resolution for Ayás Ménmen Child and Family Services, and Aboriginal Secretariat at Squamish Nation. Previously, Ms. George was a First Nation Support Worker at School Districts 44 and 48. Active in her community, she was Board Member at Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, West Vancouver Police Board, MST Development Corporation, and Polygon Gallery. Ms. George also was Coach, Manager and Player at Squamish United 30+. She is a graduate of the Ch'nook Indigenous Business Education program at the Sauder School of Business and holds a Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization from the University of Victoria. Ms. George holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of British Columbia and an Associate Degree from Capilano College.

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**Darwin Hanna**

Darwin Hanna, Founding Partner, Callison & Hanna Law. His legal work focuses on specific land claims, self-government, community development and a NWT land claim. He was lead counsel for various precedent setting Specific Claims, including Siska Indian Band v. HMTQ, 2018 SCTC 2, Akisq'nuk First Nation v. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada 2020 and Siska Indian Band v HMTQ, 2021 SCTC 2. He has been counsel on 10 specific claim settlement agreements. For the last 21 years, Darwin has taught First Nations and Economic Development as an Adjunct Professor at UBC's Allard School of Law and he recently updated the 2nd edition of Legal Issues on Indigenous Economic Development published by LexisNexis. He was the recipient of the GNWT Premier's Award for collaboration on the Wildlife Act. In 2016, Callison & Hanna was awarded the BC Aboriginal Business Award which recognizes entrepreneurial excellence in diverse and unique industries with British Columbia. He is a Director of the piye?wi?x kt Language Foundation Society. The Society hosts regular language classes, develops curriculum, and hosts the Nlakapamuxcheen site on FirstVoices. Darwin is a member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation from the community of Lytton.

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**Lennard Joe**

Lennard Joe is the CEO of the First Nations Forestry Council. Mr. Joe was previously the General Manager of Stuwix Resources Joint Venture and owner of Grizzly-Man Resource Management Ltd. He has over 29 years of forestry and business experience. Mr. Joe is a member of the Nlaka'pamux First Nation. Active in his community, he is President of Scwexmx Tribal Council, Board of Director for National Aboriginal Forestry Society & BC Indigenous Business Investment Council. Mr. Joe also is an Advisor to Chief & Council for the Shackan Band. Mr. Joe is a Registered Professional Forester & holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Conservation from the UBC & a Diploma in Conservation Wildlife Management from Selkirk College.

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**Melanie Nelson**

Melanie Nelson is Samahquam, which is one of the First Nations that make up the larger St'at'imc Nation in BC. She is also Squiala from the Stó:lō Nation. Ms. Nelson is the granddaughter of two Indian Residential School Survivors. She is Project Manager for the Indigenous Youth Mental Health Literacy project with Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Ms. Nelson is a Practicing Clinician with First Nations communities and was previously a School Psychologist at Langley School District. She is Adjunct Professor at University of British Columbia (UBC), and Teacher of Indigenous Education and Inclusive Education in Kindergarten through Grade 12 and Post-Secondary. Active in her community, Ms. Nelson is a member of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Group in the Faculty of Education at UBC as well as the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, National Association of School Psychologists, and Canadian Psychological Association. She is the recipient of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Award from the Government of Canada. Ms. Nelson has a Professional Certificate of Qualification for Teaching in British Columbia. She is a Certified School Psychologist with the British Columbia Association of School Psychologists. Ms. Nelson holds a Master of Arts in School Psychology, a Bachelor of Education in Science, a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Diploma in Special Education from UBC.

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**Kathleen Smith**

Kathleen is a Skwxwu7mesh (Squamish) Band member living on reserve. She went back to school in her mid-30's and earned a Bachelor of Business Administration. Then she started working in the finance department at my nation's band office and was encouraged to enter the Certified General Accountant (CGA) program and became a designated CPA-CGA. As an accounting manager, she always tried to support and mentor staff. Kathleen retired in November 2019 and became more involved in community activities and her Nations committees. In January 2023, she came out of retirement to work for the Nation's not for profit housing society as a Director of Finance.