



Sacajawea - was a Lemhi Shoshone woman who, in her teens, helped the Lewis and Clark Expedition in achieving their chartered mission objectives by exploring the Louisiana Territory. Sacajawea traveled with the expedition thousands of miles from North Dakota to the Pacific Ocean, helping to establish cultural contacts with Native American people and contributing to the expedition's knowledge of natural history in different regions.

In 1800, when she was 12 years old, Sacajawea was taken captive by a group of Hidatsa in a raid that resulted in the deaths of several Shoshone. She was held captive at a Hidatsa village near present-day Washburn, North Dakota.

At age 13, she was sold into a non-consensual marriage to Toussaint Charbonneau, a Quebecois trapper. Charbonneau was reported to have purchased Sacajawea from the Hidatsa, or to have possibly won her while gambling.

In 1804, the Corps of Discovery reached a Mandan village, where Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark built Fort Mandan for wintering over in 1804–05. They interviewed several trappers who might be able to interpret or guide the expedition up the Missouri River in the springtime. Knowing they would need to communicate with the tribal nations who lived at the headwaters of the Missouri River, they agreed to hire Toussaint Charbonneau, who claimed to speak several Native languages, and one of his wives, who spoke Shoshone. Sacajawea was pregnant with her first child at the time.

In April, the expedition left Fort Mandan and headed up the Missouri River in *pirogues*. On May 14, 1805, Sacagawea rescued items that had fallen out of a capsized boat, including the journals and records of Lewis and Clark. The corps commanders, who praised her quick action, named the Sacajawea River in her honor on May 20, 1805.

While Sacagawea has been depicted as a guide for the expedition, she is recorded as providing direction in only a few instances, primarily in present-day Montana. Her work as an interpreter helped the party to negotiate with the Shoshone. But, she also added significant value to the mission simply with her presence on the journey. Having a woman and infant accompany them demonstrated the peaceful intent of the expedition.

While traveling through what is now Franklin County, Washington, in October 1805, Clark noted that "the wife of Shabono [Charbonneau] our interpreter, we find reconciles all the Indians, as to our friendly intentions - a woman with a party of men is a token of peace." Further he wrote that she "confirmed to those people of our friendly intentions, as no woman ever accompanies a war party of Indians in this quarter"

Some fictional accounts speculate that Sacagawea was romantically involved with Lewis or Clark during their expedition. But, while the journals show that she was friendly with Clark and would often do favors for him, the idea of a romantic liaison was created by novelists who wrote much later about the expedition. This fiction was perpetuated in the Western film *The Far Horizons* (1955).

In the early 20th century, Sacajawea was adopted as a symbol of women's worth and independence by the National American Woman Suffrage Association.



Mary Simon - is a Canadian civil servant, diplomat, and former broadcaster who has served as the 30th governor general of Canada since July 26, 2021. Simon is Inuk, making her the **first** Indigenous person to hold the office. On July 6, 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that Queen Elizabeth II had approved the appointment of Simon as the next governor general of Canada.

Simon was born Mary Jeannie May on August 21, 1947, in Fort Severight (now Kangiqsualujjuaq), Quebec. Simon was raised in a traditional Inuit lifestyle; which included hunting, fishing, sewing Inuit clothing, and travelling by dog sled. She credits her mother and maternal grandmother Jeannie Angnatuk for passing on Inuit oral history to her.

Simon began her career as a public servant by being elected secretary of the board of directors of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association. In 1978, she was elected as vice-president, and later president, of the Makivik Corporation. She held the position until 1985.

During this period she also became involved with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami - Canada's National Inuit organization. Simon was one of the senior Inuit negotiators during the patriation of the Canadian Constitution, the First Ministers' conferences that took place from 1982 to 1992, as well as the 1992 Charlottetown Accord discussions.

She served as a member of the Nunavut Implementation Commission and as co-director (policy) and secretary to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

In 1994, Simon was appointed by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to be Canadian Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs, a newly created position she held until early 2004. Acting on instructions from the Government of Canada she took the lead role in negotiating the creation of an eight-country council known today as the Arctic Council. The 1996 Ottawa Declaration formally established the Arctic Council which includes the active participation of the Indigenous Peoples of the circumpolar world. During her chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and later as Canada's Senior Arctic Official, she worked closely with the Indigenous Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council, and the seven other Arctic Countries it comprises.

Simon considers the concept of *ajuinnata* as an important theme for her mandate as governor general. *Ajuinnata* is an Inuktitut word that does not have a one-word translation, as it encompasses many things: a vow or a promise to never give up, or a commitment to action no matter how daunting the cause may be. Simon said that the word was taught to her by her mother and grandmother, and is an important concept for Inuit. According to Simon, the spirit of *ajuinnata* drove her to get involved in movements to improve the lives of Inuit in Canada.



Michelle O'Bonsawin - In 2017, O'Bonsawin was the **first** Indigenous Canadian to be appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in Ottawa. She assumed office on May 18, 2017 and was there until 2022. In her application for the position, she described her legal philosophy as "progressive". Concurrently while working as a judge, O'Bonsawin worked on earning a doctorate in law from the University of Ottawa, and successfully defended her thesis on Gladue principles in February 2022.

On August 19, 2022, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau nominated O'Bonsawin to the Supreme Court of Canada to replace retiring Justice Michael Moldaver. On August 26, 2022, the Office of the Prime Minister announced that her appointment was formally confirmed and she would join the Supreme Court on September 1, 2022. O'Bonsawin is the **first** Indigenous person to sit on Canada's highest court.

O'Bonsawin began her legal career working for Royal Canadian Mounted Police legal services. She also worked as in-house counsel for Canada Post for nine years before she joined the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group in 2009. There she worked as general counsel and established its legal services department responsible for the Indigenous Relations Program. She appeared as counsel for the organization on mental-health cases before the Ontario Superior Court and Ontario Court of Appeal as well as tribunals such as Ontario's Consent and Capacity Board and the Ontario Review Board.

Justice O'Bonsawin has taught Indigenous law at the University of Ottawa's Common Law Program and is a frequent guest speaker on *Gladue* principles, Indigenous issues, as well as mental health, labour, and privacy law. She is currently a Partner Judge for Afghanistan Women Judges with the International Association of Women Judges.

Justice O'Bonsawin previously served on the Board of Governors of the University of Ottawa, as well as its Executive Committee, and as a Board member for the Aboriginal Legal Services of the University of Ottawa Legal Aid Clinic. She was an observer member of the Membership Committee of Odanak First Nation and a Board member of the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice.

Born in Hanmer, Ontario, a small Francophone town near Sudbury, she now resides in Ottawa with her family. A fluently bilingual Franco-Ontarian, Justice O'Bonsawin is an Abenaki member of the Odanak First Nation.

Below - Link to a news article on 10 Indigenous Women who are following their passions – written in 2019

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indigenous-women-iwd-profiles-1.5047343>