



VICTORY THROUGH HONOUR
75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Event and Program

20 SEPTEMBER 2024



MESSAGE FROM MUSQUEAM

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA'S main campus is situated in the heart of Musqueam territory on land that has always been a place of learning for Musqueam. Despite this history, Musqueam was not meaningfully represented on campus for many decades.

In recent years, Musqueam's presence has increased significantly due to the dedication of past and current leaders. Through the development of a relationship rooted in mutual respect, today you can see Musqueam's language and artwork across the UBC Point Grey campus, including Deanna-Marie Point's *Thunderbird Takes Flight*, which is the first official Musqueam representation of the Thunderbird at UBC.

hay čx^w qə to Deanna-Marie for continuing to share and represent Musqueam culture and values through your artwork, and for being a role model for emerging Musqueam artists.

hay ce:p qə to our many partners at UBC, including President Benoit-Antoine Bacon and Alma Mater Society President CK Kyle, for their commitment to learning about Musqueam and deepening our relationship.

Finally, hay ce:p qə to the Neel and Scow families for carrying on the legacy of Ellen Neel and Chief William Scow. At a time of severe oppression and denial of Indigenous rights, Neel and Scow shared their culture proudly, worked to ensure that Indigenous students felt represented at UBC, and respected Musqueam's protocols and relationship to this land. We are honoured to continue this work alongside the Neel and Scow families.

— yəx^wyəx^wələq

Chief Wayne Sparrow, Musqueam Indian Band

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

IT IS A DISTINCT HONOUR to be part of this important celebration, commemorating an important chapter in UBC's history.

I would like to sincerely thank the Neel family and the Kwakw̱kw̱'wakw people for their incredible gifts to UBC—the *Victory Through Honour* pole and the Thunderbird name. Both hold deep meaning for the UBC community, and it is a privilege to continue carrying this honour with respect and responsibility.

The *Victory Through Honour* pole, carved by Ellen Neel, stands as a lasting symbol of the values we are entrusted to uphold, and we are committed to doing so with the utmost respect. The Thunderbird name embodies the strength, leadership, and integrity we strive to reflect in our university community. The entire UBC community bears the Thunderbird name with pride.

I also wish to acknowledge and honour Deanna-Marie Point's beautiful artwork *Thunderbird Takes Flight*. As the first official Musqueam representation of the Thunderbird, her work is a powerful reminder of our deep relationship with Musqueam, and of our responsibility to foster positive relationships with Indigenous communities on campus and across BC.

Together, the work of Ellen Neel and Deanna-Marie Point are profound embodiment and testament to the strength, creativity and vision of Indigenous carvers and artists.

On behalf of UBC, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Neel family and Deanna-Marie Point, as well as to the Kwakw̱kw̱'wakw and Musqueam communities. On this special day, UBC remains as always dedicated to working, learning, and growing together in partnership.

— DR. BENOIT-ANTOINE BACON

President and Vice-Chancellor, The University of British Columbia



MESSAGE FROM THE ALMA MATER SOCIETY (AMS)

THE THUNDERBIRD HAS LONG BEEN a powerful symbol for UBC athletes and students alike. Together with the *Victory Through Honour* pole, carved by Ellen Neel, they embody strength, perseverance, and ideals that unite us. These symbols serve as a reminder of the values they represent—values we, as students, strive to carry with us throughout our journey.

I would also like to recognize Musqueam artist Deanna-Marie Point, whose beautiful work, *Thunderbird Takes Flight*, deepens our connection to the Musqueam people and invites students to learn more about the land on which our university stands.

It is a privilege to be a student on this land, and an honour to be represented by the Thunderbird. On behalf of UBC Vancouver students, I would like to express our deepest gratitude to the Kwakw̱waḵ'wakw and Musqueam people, Ellen and Edward Neel, Chief William Scow, and their descendants for the gifts bestowed upon us in 1948.

— CHRISTIAN 'CK' KYLE
2024-2025 AMS President



MESSAGE FROM THE DESCENDANTS OF ELLEN NEEL, KAKASOLAS

ON BEHALF OF THE descendants of Kakasolas–Ellen Neel and descendants of Chief William Scow, it is an honour to celebrate the 75th anniversary of three important gifts:

1. The *Victory Through Honour* totem pole;
2. The corresponding *Victory Through Honour* legend; and,
3. The official naming of the UBC Thunderbirds on behalf of the Kwakw̱akw̱'wakw people.

When our grandmother, Kakasolas, Ellen Neel decided in April 1948 to gift a totem pole to the University of British Columbia and its sports teams, Ellen and our grandfather, Ted Neel Sr. wrote to the president, Norman A. MacKenzie, to share their idea.

The offer of the gift of a totem pole for the varsity teams was accepted, and six months later, on October 30, 1948, the *Victory Through Honour* totem pole and corresponding legend were gifted to the university at halftime of the annual Homecoming Football game.

Today we celebrate the 75th and soon the 76th anniversary of this gift having been presented, and three quarters of a century of excellence in sport, as well as seven decades of support and encouragement to all Native students who attend this university.

In the words of our grandmother:

“To the Native people of the whole province we can give our assurance that your children will be accepted at this school by the Staff and Student Council, eager to smooth their paths with kindness and understanding. We need now only students to take advantage of the opportunity, so that someday our doctors, lawyers, social workers and departmental workers will be fully trained University graduates of our own race.”

— Ellen Neel, 1948 Source: *The Native Voice* November 1948

And in the words of our great uncle, Chief William Scow, we affirm the ongoing relationship between the university, our family, and the Musqueam people—a lifelong relationship that has continued from our grandparents' generation to our generation, and on to our children and grandchildren. Chief Scow proclaimed:

“On behalf of Ellen and Edward Neel, and with the full consent and approval of our tribal council and our people, I present this totem to the Alma Mater Society of this University. I give to you also the right to use the name Thunderbird for your teams. This is according to the laws of my people and is hereby legal for the first time. The totem has been carved for you by our two best tribal carvers. It has a long and an honorable history: a totem of which your teams have every right to be proud. It is yours now, and if you follow the precepts accepted with it, you cannot fail.”

— Chief William Scow, 1948 Source: *The Native Voice* November 1948

Today we remember the gift of the totem pole, its accompanying legend and the bestowal of the name 'Thunderbirds' to UBC's athletics department.

We will mark this occasion in the way.

VICTORY THROUGH HONOUR – THE FOUR TESTS OF TSEKUME

THE LEGEND OF THE FOUR TESTS OF TSEKUME originates with the Kwikwasutaineuk people of Metap—a place commonly referred to in modern times as Gilford Island in Viner Sound. The legend is part of a complex and sophisticated history that connects our people with the lands and waters from which we originate, and where our people have been since the beginning of time when supernatural beings lived amongst us.

This legend was customized to share important philosophies and values with all the athletes, staff and students at the University of British Columbia. It speaks of ‘four tests’ that the central character of the story, Tsekume—or Red Cedar Man—must endure to demonstrate his commitment to the ideals of honour, respect, integrity, and excellence.

In the legend, the first test Tsekume endures is being beheaded by the Supernatural Being, Kha-ne-ki-laqw—who was unsure as to whether Tsekume was a Supernatural Being with good intentions or bad.

The first test Kha-ne-ki-laqw imposed was to behead Tsekume and cast his head into the skies above; however, the clouds of the Sky World recognized Tsekume and caught his head, then helped to re-attach it to Tsekume’s body, thereby restoring Tsekume to his original self.

In the second test, Kha-ne-ki-laqw binds Tsekume in a wooden box which he then casts into the fire—thinking it would fully engulf and destroy him; but the flames recognized Tsekume, and helped to burn away at the ropes that bound the wooden box and were able to release Tsekume, enabling him to be restored to his original self.

In the third test, Kha-ne-ki-laqw captured Tsekume and disemboweled him and divided his bowels into four parts—then cast them into the four directions. But the four winds recognized Tsekume, and carefully brought together these four parts so Tsekume could once again be restored to his original self.

And finally, Kha-ne-ki-laqw realized that Tsekume was very powerful, and was able to survive the first three tests, so Kha-ne-ki-laqw determined that the only way to destroy Tsekume once and for all was to tie a boulder around him and send him to the bottom of the ocean.

But when Kha-ne-ki-laqw did so, the beings of the Kingdom Beneath the Sea recognized Tsekume and worked together to save him; they brought Tsekume to Koniqwis—the leader of the great Undersea Kingdom. Koniqwis acknowledged and welcomed Tsekume, and held a great potlatch for him, during which Koniqwis bestowed many rights, privileges and prerogatives to Tsekume.

These rights, privileges and prerogatives included a totem pole that stood in the Undersea Kingdom—a pole that depicts the Naanis—the great grizzly bear of the sea; Ma-akinuk, the powerful man-monster; Wa’kaas, the frog; Kuuma, the bullhead; and surmounting all these, the great and mighty Thunderbird.

Koniqwis gave Tsekume this pole and said to him, “In the future you will commemorate this occasion at your own potlatches by using this totem.”

For the students and athletes at the University of British Columbia, the four tests are a metaphor for the kinds of challenges that all must overcome during their life’s journeys in education, sport, and in service to the community.

The key message Ellen and Ted wrote about in this legend was that, in upholding the principles of honour, respect, integrity, and excellence, we can each achieve Victory Through Honour—for ourselves, our teams, our families and our communities.

(abridged version by Lou-ann Neel, granddaughter of Ellen Neel & Ted Neel Sr.)



THUNDERBIRD TAKES FLIGHT

THE THUNDERBIRD WAS CREATED by Mother Earth and Father Sky to communicate their love for each other. It was the messenger between the two and showed the love and life on earth. Father Sky controls the weather and the four seasons. Without the seasons, we could not survive. If someone saw thunder and lightening in the sky, it meant that Mother Earth was sending a message to Father Sky. And if they were lucky enough to spot the thunderbird, it brought wealth and good fortune.

ABOUT DEANNA-MARIE POINT

Deanna-Marie Point is a x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) artist with experience in 2D design, jewelry carving, mural painting, and other visual mediums. She comes from a family of artists—her mother is a master weaver trained in Musqueam weaving and design, and her father is a carver. Deanna was raised with cultural and ancestral teachings, which deeply inform her artistic practices. At a young age, Deanna developed a passion for visual art and would sit with her father and his teachers to learn about traditional Coast Salish art and its history. Her work has been featured throughout Musqueam territory, including on TELUS fleet vehicles and virtually in a fictional representation of Musqueam's soccer field for the the *FIFA 23* video game.

PROGRAM OF CEREMONY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

10:30 AM REGISTRATION

11:00 AM WELCOME, MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND

EMCEE - ADINA WILLIAMS

COUNCILLOR GORDON GRANT

MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND

12:00 PM LUNCH

KWAKWAKWA'WAKW FEAST SONG

NEEL & SCOW FAMILIES CULTURAL WORK

KWAKWAKWA'WAKW

CLOSING REMARKS & REFLECTION

JOSIAH AMAYA

DR. BENOIT-ANTOINE BACON

PRESIDENT, THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (UBC)

CHRISTIAN CK KYLE

PRESIDENT, ALMA MATER SOCIETY (AMS)

CELEBRATION SONG

2:00 PM EVENT END

We acknowledge that the UBC Vancouver campus is situated on the ancestral and unceded territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) people.





THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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— EST. 1915 —