

Artist's Statement Renewal

Rebecca Dunnett

This design was inspired by Mi'kmaq quill work, something in which the Mi'kmaq people are famous for. I wanted to represent the Northeastern First Nation people of Canada. We often see many representations of Indigenous cultures from the north such as Inuit and Cree. Also from the west and the south such as Black foot, Ojibway, Apache, etc. Those are the familiar Art styles that we often see represented in mainstream media.

Even though different tribes share some similarities with each other, each one is unique. I know my people did not wear headdresses like the ones in the west and south, nor do I believe the famous and now commercialized dream catcher originated with us. So that is why I took my inspiration from works of art actually created by our people. Quill work is one of those works of art that has been around for centuries and was widely used by the Mi'kmaq.

I used a sunrise design to go with the theme of this year's conference "A New Dawn in Indigenous Economies". I added two circles interlocking to symbolize unity, one is a half circle connected to the earth, meaning we are grounded and close to mother earth. What the theme says to me is, we are gaining back our pride and independence as the first people of this country by reconnecting and coming together.

The human figure at the top is what I used to symbolize our ancestors that came before us. There are small white dots behind them going in a disk shape, those are stars. I put them there to say, that our ancestors that are above will guide us through changes and lessons in life. The tipi's or "wigwams", I used to represent "home". This is where home is and it has been for centuries.

And lastly, the bottom design was inspired by the traditional double curve that is used in many works of art of the Mi'kmaq people. I used some elements such as the berries at the end and the flower in the middle to represent nature's abundance and our growth as a nation.

It is my privilege and distinct honour to present to you the 20th issue of the *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, or *JAED*. The first issue was published in 1997, 20 years ago, and it has been a wonderful and meaningful journey for all involved to this point in time. *Huy tseep q'u Siiem nu Siye'yu* (“Thank you respected friends and colleagues” in Hul’q’umi’num’). The Journal, co-published by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) and Captus Press, links practitioners, leaders, community change-agents, and researchers not only to each other, but also to those who coordinate, manage, lead, participate in, and teach about the governance and leadership of Indigenous community, business, entrepreneurial, and economic development. This issue, like the 19 issues that came before, highlights and profiles the ground-breaking economic development work that has been taking place in Indigenous communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

As I read through previous issues, I continue to be intrigued by the meaningful coverage of the range and diversity of topics. I invite readers of this issue to do the same and to engage with previous issues, as if for the first time. Each story, each leadership or student profile, each coverage of promising practices, and each topic researched, is as relevant and meaningful today as they were 20 years ago. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s “Calls to Action”, in addition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a document “that describes both individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world”, including economic and development rights, further affirms the need for our continuing effort to promote Aboriginal economic development and self-governance.

I trust that you will find this issue informative and interesting, and I look forward to your feedback and/or future submissions. Here is to the next 20 issues! *Huy ch q'u* — thank you.

Warren Weir