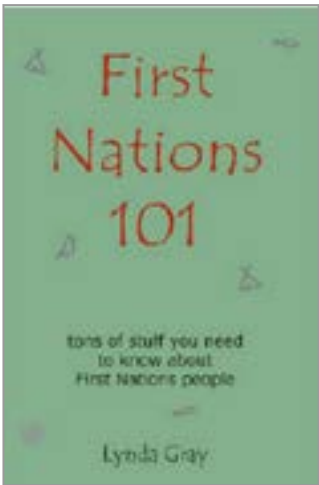


BOOK REVIEWS:

First Nations 101 and The Reason You Walk

Jocelyn Allen



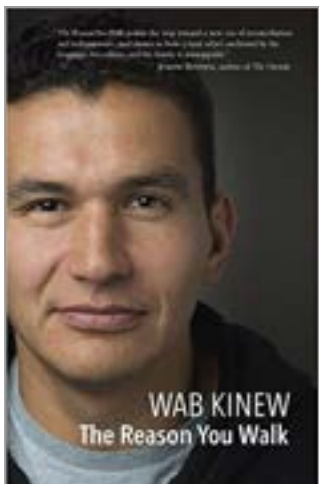
First Nations 101: Tons of Stuff You Need to Know about First Nations People

Linda Gray

*Adwaax Publishing, 2011.
Currently in a third printing
(2013)*

The book can be ordered from the author (www.firstnations101.com) with one dollar from the sale of each book donated

to the Urban Youth Association's capital campaign to build a native youth centre in Vancouver



The Reason You Walk

Wab Kinew

*Viking: Penguin Random
House,
2015. 288 pages.*

These two books complement one another. *First Nations 101* is a useful, if opinionated, handbook written by a Tsimshian woman from the west coast of British Columbia. *The*

Reason You Walk is a memoir, also written by a First Nations person, but one from Winnipeg and Northern Ontario. Gray's book was first published in 2011. It is slightly out of date, especially the statistics, but it is a readable and helpful overview of the realities of First Nations people—especially for this reader who needed

this basic information. Lynda Gray ends up suggesting ways all of us can play active roles in bringing about true reconciliation between First Nations and non-First Nations people. (pp. 266-267)

Wab Kinew's book is more recent and he writes a memoir full of pain and yet also hope. The book was one of five finalists shortlisted for the RBC Taylor prize. It is the story of Kinew's difficult relationship with his father, a man badly seared by his residential school experience. Yet, the memoir is much more than a father-son reconciliation. Kinew explores indigenous culture and traditions, and draws strength and renewal from them. He speaks of the way forward as well as of the painful past.

We see the young Kinew growing up under an angry father, rebelling as a teen, and slowly growing aware of the impact of the residential school on his father, on himself, and on their relationship, and indeed on all of first nations society. We see Kinew grow from these beginnings to become a hereditary chief, successful hip hop musician, public speaker, broadcaster, acting associate vice-president for Indigenous Affairs at the University of Winnipeg, and honorary witness for the truth and reconciliation commission. Recently he was elected member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for the Fort Rouge riding.

Kinew is married, has two sons and lives in Winnipeg. He sees his main role as being a good parent and in trying to prevent the transmission of the past to the Indigenous children of today, especially to his own sons. He, too, writes suggestions of what everyone can do to help improve a shameful situation.

It is good to see a young Indigenous man rooted as Kinew is in his language, culture and family with resolve and optimism determined to make change. ☐

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Jocelyn is involved in the Aboriginal Issues Working Group and has a deep love of books and reading.