



THE CANADIAN CANOE MUSEUM
LE MUSÉE CANADIEN DU CANOT

NEWS RELEASE

The Canadian Canoe Museum welcomes Robin Binèsi Cavanagh as Director of Indigenous Peoples' Collaborative Relations

Mr. Cavanagh, of Spanish, Ontario, joins the museum as it plans for its move to the water's edge

PETERBOROUGH, ON, January 30, 2019 – The Canadian Canoe Museum Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Robin Binèsi Cavanagh, a member of Sagamok First Nation, to the new role of Director of Indigenous Peoples' Collaborative Relations.

As planning for its new 85,000 square-foot facility at the water's edge continues, the museum is furthering its commitment to build and foster relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. As the newest member of the museum's curatorial team, Mr. Cavanagh, who now resides in Young's Point, will play a key role in facilitating collaborative relations. As an Elder's Helper under Herb Nabigon, Pic River; student; teacher and administrative leader, much of Mr. Cavanagh's work has focused on cultural protocols and ethics, and cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding.

The new museum, to be built alongside the Peterborough Lift Lock on the Trent-Severn Waterway, will house the world's largest collection of canoes, kayaks and paddled watercraft. Designed by an award-winning team of heneghan peng architects (Dublin, Ireland) with Kearns Mancini Architects (Toronto, Canada), the new museum will make accessible all 600 watercraft, thousands of small artifacts and an archive. The museum has partnered with world-class exhibition design firm GSM Project to create one-of-a-kind visitor experiences.

"On behalf of the board, staff and volunteers, we are pleased to welcome Robin to this new, and incredibly important role," says Dianne Lister, Chair of the Exhibit Design Committee and Member, Board of Directors. "With the new museum comes an opportunity, and a responsibility, to broaden and deepen our collaborative relations with Indigenous Peoples. Robin will lead the museum in its outreach, creating the conditions for collaboration, and the foundation for long-term relationships."

Approximately one third of the museum's collection is of Indigenous origin, which includes birch bark and dugout canoes, and skin-on-frame kayaks from communities from coast to coast to coast. The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people were the first to paddle on this land, and the canoes and kayaks of today, not dramatically different from those of time immemorial, are the result of millennia of intergenerational knowledge sharing. The exhibits in the new museum will explore these legacies with a balance of stories from the past and the present.

"I am honoured to be a helper, and a facilitator, and to join the museum at this exciting time in its evolution," says Mr. Cavanagh. "Guided by the artifacts in the collection and with the canoe as the connector, we will be building on the relationships the museum has in regions across Canada. We look forward to the sharing of stories and traditions, and to involving communities in the creation of our new exhibits. However, we want to see these relationships continue far beyond opening day. In fact, that's just the beginning."

About Robin Cavanagh

Robin believes that true leadership is to be an excellent helper. Since 1986, he has been a helper to Anishinaabe Elder Herb Nabigon (now deceased), acquiring cultural knowledge/protocols in an effort to ensure that cultural teachings, ceremonies and philosophy continue for generations to come. Through this lens, Robin has focused his education, employment and community activity. Robin holds a Master of Environmental Studies from York University (*Development of an Aboriginal Organizational Theory*) and a Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies from Trent University.

For 20 years, Robin has been working to promote and support Indigenous perspectives as a researcher, policy analyst and writer, and as a curriculum developer and educator at the graduate level. His work spans Indigenous communities, organizations and post-secondary institutions, including the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, where he taught a leading course on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for teacher candidates. His most recent roles include Senior Policy Advisor with the Chiefs of Ontario, and Associate Director, Indigenous Education Coalition.

About The Canadian Canoe Museum

With our world-class collection as a catalyst, The Canadian Canoe Museum inspires connection, curiosity and new understanding. In partnership with individuals, groups and communities – locally, provincially and nationally – we work to experience and explore all that our collection can inspire. This sees students opening their minds in our galleries; community members connecting through artisanry; people of all ages getting on the water and learning to paddle; and exhibitions and events that spark conversation and collaboration.

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A photograph of Robin Cavanagh is attached.

For further information:

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