

GLADUE PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER 2023

NISHNAWBE-ASKI LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

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ISSUE NO.2

Honouring the life of **GEORGE D. EDWARDS**



**THIS NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED
TO OUR LATE GLADUE MANAGER,
GEORGE EDWARDS**

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

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INTRODUCTION

Wachiye, Boozhoo, Aniin, Greetings

Welcome to the Fall 2023 newsletter for the Gladue program at Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services.

It's been a challenging time for the Gladue program in recent months. In August, we lost our manager George Edwards, who passed away on Aug. 24. The news came as a shock to us all, and we're still reeling from the loss. George had been with the Gladue program since its inception in 2014, first as a writer before making his way to Gladue Team Lead, and eventually, the Gladue Manager in 2019. He had watched the program grow from its initial group of three Gladue Writers to its current complement of 12 team members consisting of six Gladue Writers and six Gladue caseworkers across our coverage region in northern Ontario.

A member of Fort Albany First Nation, and a former police officer with Nishnawbe Aski Police Services, George was passionate about justice issues facing our community members in Nishnawbe Aski Nation. George was raised in Thunder Bay but maintained his connection to his family and friends in Fort Albany, the James Bay coast, and Timmins. At his memorial service, his nephew joked that Highway 11 from Thunder Bay to Cochrane should be renamed the George Edwards Highway because he had traversed it so much throughout the years.

George was a family man, and it was obvious in how he ran the Gladue program. While he conducted the expected managerial duties of assigning and reviewing reports and approving requests, he also checked in with you on your mental health and life in general. He understood, with the stories we hear and our clients' unique challenges, that this is hard work. He made the time to listen and ensure we were heard. He understood that while we do our best to serve our community members, life happens, and we need to take care of ourselves. But he also pushed us when we needed it. And he knew how to have fun (Leafs playoff failures be damned).

As you can see in the tributes to George in this newsletter, we miss him dearly. He was a warm, compassionate leader, and the team decided not long after his memorial service that we needed to produce a newsletter for him as a tribute. He played a significant role in our lives, not only as our manager, but as a friend.

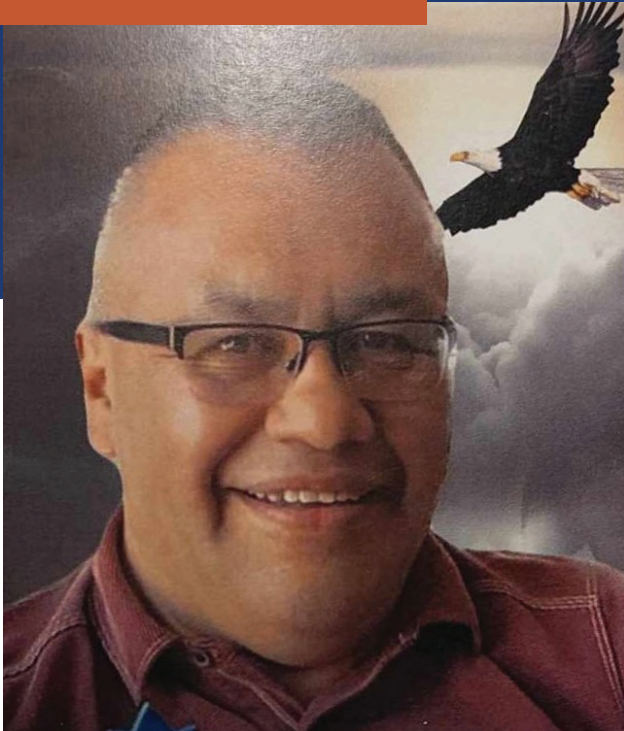
At the time of this writing, a new Gladue manager has yet to be selected. But to whomever it is, good luck to them, because George left big shoes to fill – as the acting Gladue manager, I can attest to that. When I was appointed to this role in mid-September, I did not realize how much he had on his plate. It's a lot to live up to.

We offer our sincerest condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues. We miss you, George.

Lenny Carpenter,

Senior Gladue Writer, Acting Gladue Manager

In Honour



FROM THE CURRENT GLADUE TEAM:

Pool and TikTok

I had the privilege of meeting George a few years ago while doing what we love: playing pool. My first impression of George was that he was nice, kind, and a good pool player. I've also had the great privilege of working with George.

Over time, I saw how much he loved and cared for his family, his friends, and anyone he knew. He would go above and beyond. He was always busy with work, but he always made time for his family. He was genuinely the nicest, kindest, hardworking, family-oriented person. He was a role model, a man that anyone and everyone could look up to.

I think my favourite memory of George would be when we took our work trip to Ottawa, and he drove us to the Ottawa sign. As we were taking group pictures, he said, "Let's do a TikTok and do a dance!" Everyone did. He was having so much fun.

He is and will always be missed.

Alexandria Adams
Gladue Caseworker, Thunder Bay"

For George

Integrity was your compass. You were the aurora, bright and ever moving. You laughed from your heart and were generous beyond measure. You were the wolves I heard howling on a distant shore. A melancholy that carried across the lake. I sat against the rocks that had been heated through by the afternoon sun. I said goodbye here. The trees dropped late-August leaves, red and yellow on the lake's surface, as a quiet reminder that autumn was on the way. But you George will forever be in summer.

Thank you, for everything.

Diana Pine
Gladue Caseworker, Red Lake

of George

Before He Was a Leafs Fan

George and I developed the majority of the Gladue program that you see here. Bryan, George, and I are the remaining of the original team that was hired in 2017. George was one of the original three that was hired to cover the NAN territory in 2015.

George valued the traditions and ceremonies of our strong Anishinaabe culture and implemented key elements into our debriefings for our team to be supported.

I will miss him as he was my manager, co-worker, and friend and I knew him before he was a Leafs fan. I have pictures of him wearing an Edmonton Oilers jersey as a youth. I wish him a safe journey home to the ancestral lands and hope he feels our love from down here.

Terri Zoccole
Gladue Caseworker Lead,
Thunder Bay



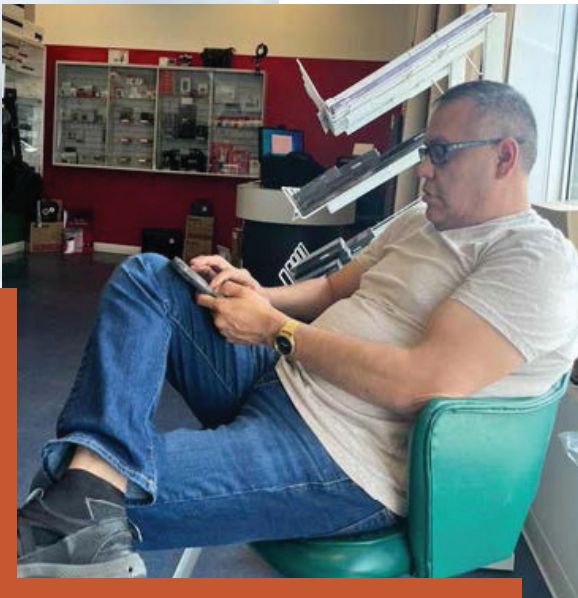


George, Eggcetra

George Edwards and I met almost nine years ago during the startup of the Gladue program at Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services. We were hired as Gladue Writers and were soon joined in that role by Jennifer McKenzie. Together with our first Manager, Mary Bird, we learned about the Gladue legal decision, the purpose of Gladue reports, and how these reports could benefit Nishnawbe Aski Nation people. We never stopped learning as our program evolved and grew.

In the beginning, we relied a lot on the Gladue experience and legal expertise of Aboriginal Legal Services (ALS) in Toronto, which required periodic trips there for training. George was based in Timmins and later in Thunder Bay, while I was in Sioux Lookout and later Kenora, so we saw each other in Toronto more than anywhere else. We spent time with ALS staff at their office and in provincial Gladue workshops they hosted, visited the Gladue Court and participated in a national Gladue conference at Osgoode Law School, met with lawyers and judges with specialized knowledge in Gladue, and received counsel and stories from Elders.

Just as important to me was the way George and I started each day in Toronto – with breakfasts together at the Eggcetra diner across from our hotel. (A light continental breakfast at the hotel or a muffin and juice in the conference room wasn't enough for us.) Over bacon and eggs, we talked about what was working well in our jobs



and what we could do differently; about the struggles and successes of our clients and their communities; about our past careers, in his policing, mine in journalism, and how those experiences informed our Gladue work; about our families and our efforts to find work-life balance; and what we would do that evening when the workday was done (often wander at Eaton's Centre, where George always bought something for his family). These conversations continued by phone and email when we returned to our respective offices, and never really ended. We developed a strong friendship.

I appreciated George's kindness, generosity, calm demeanor, respectfulness, work ethic, perseverance, fairness, and humour. These attributes served him well when he became the Manager of our Gladue program. He also brought to his leadership an important perspective from his lived experience and understanding of life in the Cree communities of the James Bay coast and in NAN communities in general. To me, this was the source of George's deep empathy and passion for achieving true justice for NAN people.

When George came to Kenora to look at a used boat he considered buying for his family (upon inspection, he deemed the boat's hull too shallow and therefore unsafe), I took him for lunch at a restaurant with a patio overlooking Lake of the Woods, eager to show off my hometown. We ordered mushroom burgers. After taking our first bites, George's face expressed great

disappointment and he said, "Bryan, there is no meat on my burger." To the surprise of both of us, each 'burger' contained only a giant mushroom, no hamburger. George didn't complain; he rarely did. Later, it gave us something else to laugh about.

During our last trip to Toronto, we stayed at a different hotel but stumbled upon another Eggcetra restaurant, much bigger and more modern than our usual. We shared another hearty, old-school breakfast.

Bryan Phelan
Senior Gladue Writer, Kenora



To George:

The inner warrior in me is saddened that I lost you too soon. But I am honoured to have known you at all.

The impact of colonization and the residential school system has really affected our people. No one else but us (the survivors) will truly understand the hurt and the never-ending healing needed just to live a steady, healthy life.

With the amount of passion you had; you would have known that pain too. You were very passionate—it made you kind-hearted. So, I miss my late Gladue manager, George.

Feather Metatawabin
Gladue Writer, Timmins

In Honour of George CONTINUED

George-bun

I was both shocked and saddened at the news that our Gladue Program Manager, the late George Edwards, had died suddenly. Thankfully, Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation (also known as NAN Legal) informed staff that they could take a couple of days off to sit with the tragic news. I doubt I would have completed much work in the days immediately following his death anyway. Equally important, NAN Legal supported Gladue Program staff to travel to Thunder Bay to attend the late George's funeral. It was very important to me to be able pay my final respects, in person, to the late George. I was also grateful for the opportunity to sit face-to-face with members of our Gladue team to share our feelings about the late George's death. That sharing circle definitely helped me to learn more about the late George's life and how he had positively impacted different staff members' lives. I was also grateful for the support of Indigenous Elder, Tina Armstrong, during that circle. Miikwech Tina.

The late George Edwards hired me as a Gladue Writer in August 2020, and I am grateful to George for making that wise decision! Just kidding. Because I had previous experience as a Gladue Writer, George-bun (from what I understand, in my area, bun is added to a person's name as a way to identify that the person has passed away) did not have to spend too much time training me and I think he liked that. He could just "let me at it", so to speak.

About 10 months after starting as a Gladue Writer, another job opportunity arose at NAN Legal that caught my attention. With George-bun's blessing, I applied and was successful in attaining that opportunity. George-bun was gracious enough to provide a work reference to help me get that job. I also appreciated his graciousness in allowing me to gain additional work experience here at NAN Legal. Unfortunately, that position ended, but as luck would have it, there was another Gladue Writer posting in the department and George-bun welcomed me back into the Gladue Program. I've been here since.

In total, I've known the late George for about 3 years. That was enough time though, to see that he cared deeply for his workers, for our clients and in general, about Nishnawbe Aski Nation community members who were facing challenges with the Canadian legal system. He spoke passionately about any injustices he witnessed. He led by example in that way. I hope, that in his memory, I do my best to speak up about injustices faced by Nishnawbe Aski Nation community members, just like he did.

Rest in peace, George-bun. You did good work here.

Leslie King
Gladue Writer, Red Lake

Farewell Boss

What can I say? I am still utterly shocked. It is fascinating how you can go from seeing someone everyday to not seeing them at all. For the short period of time that I have

known George, I can say that he was a kind and generous man. Even though he was a workaholic, he was there if you needed him and always answered his calls (even at 9 p.m.). George really valued his culture and cared for his people. I will miss him trying to pronounce my last name and his obsession over the Toronto Maple Leafs. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to have worked with George. Thank you for all the memories. Stay strong, Edwards family.

Joyce Nwaubani
Gladue Writer, Thunder Bay

To George:

It's been difficult to get back on track since the day I heard you passed... There have been days at work where I've thought of the great qualities you had as my supervisor. From the time of my hiring in 2020 just before the COVID-19 pandemic changed our world. These were very difficult times and also uncertainty seemed to be the norm. You provided our Gladue team with support, compassion and love. It was comforting to know you had our back in those times.

However, what I've been thinking about most, is the kind and loving person you were, George. You were my friend, and this was important to me. I feel you led us to the best of your ability. You brought humor and a trusting nature. You understood the people we were trying to help and support. You understood the families and communities we served. And mostly you brought family-like qualities to our team. I saw your passion and it clearly resonated in your stories and life experience.



I'll reflect after I write this letter George, about how to move forward and use some of things I learned from you. This I know without a doubt. You had breathed life into our Gladue team and program. Your spirit is here with us. This I know. So, when you come to visit me and our team, I'll welcome you, listen to your words and keep moving forward. Because that is what you would want us to do. Love you my friend...

Bob Albany
Gladue Caseworker, Kenora

Learning From Him

It's still hard and surreal to speak of George in the past tense. I still hope sometimes that I'll get a call from him or bump into him at the office, extra-large Tim's steeped tea in hand. George was a force of nature, he was a colleague and a friend. George loved his job, he treated everyone with respect and kindness. I learned so much from him and have so much more to learn still. He taught us all how to be more understanding, compassionate, and inclusive. He made the world a better place, and I miss him dearly.

Thank you,

Oana Cristea
Gladue Lawyer, Timmins"



FROM THE PAST GLADUE TEAM:

Family Was Important to Him

I began my writing career with NAN Legal in 2020 as a Gladue Writer and that is where I first met George. When I met him, he was very welcoming, and he was very passionate about the Gladue Program. He trained me on how to write reports and helped me gain confidence in writing. One thing about George, he was understanding and he was always there for you when you needed to ask him something or if you were looking for guidance. He reassured you and gave you that little push when you needed it. I learned from George to not sweat the small stuff and don't overthink or stress about things and that everything will work out in the end. I will always carry his words of wisdom and guidance during my life path. In the short time of knowing and working with George, I have seen that his family was so important to him. He valued his time with his family and his time spent on the land doing things such as fishing and camping. He was always happy and excited when he talked about what he did on the weekend with his family during our Monday morning check-in team meetings. He will surely be missed within the organization and in the community. I am happy to have met and known George and I pray for his family to continue to be surrounded by his everlasting love and to comfort them during this difficult time.

Rutanya Iserhoff
Former Gladue Writer, Timmins

Sharing thoughts about George Edwards

I began working at Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services in 2017 as a writer with the Gladue Department. I was one of many writers who was hired to add to the small but effective original Gladue Team, which included George.

I had met George many years before when he worked as a Police Officer in my community of Peawanuck. We weren't close friends, but we knew each other and had similar friend circles. Fast forward to 2017 when we started working together. Immediately, I could feel George's passion for the work we were doing, and he taught me some of the ins and outs of the program and the impact it had on our people.

I left Gladue in 2020 to start in Bail Supervision, but George and I were able to work together this past year on the Bail Bed Project and were able to spend a lot more time together during his visits to Timmins. He worked very hard for NAN Legal but would talk about the time off he enjoyed with his family, with whom he loved so much.

I will always remember the friendly jabs he would take at my partner – who loves the Montreal Canadians – his undying love for the Leafs, and his giving nature when working with our similar clients who were living rough.

George is deeply missed at the Timmins office, and I especially want to acknowledge his contribution to many diverse spaces. Meegwetch George.

Catherine Gull
Former Gladue Writer, Timmins"



About George

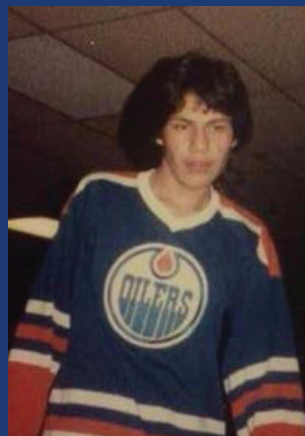
A BIOGRAPHY WRITTEN BY THE LATE GEORGE EDWARDS

George Edwards was one of the original three Gladue writers hired in 2014 when Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services' Gladue services program was started. In December 2018, George was promoted to Team Lead and later to Gladue Manager.

George is originally from Fort Albany, First Nation. He is fluent in his Ojibwe (Cree) language. At a young age, George left his home community and resided in Thunder Bay during his childhood and adolescent years; eventually returning to Fort Albany when he was hired as a police officer with Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service. He was a police officer for 10 years, primarily working in the Northeast region until he was honourably discharged from his policing duties. During this period.

George enjoyed working and serving the communities he policed. He gained much knowledge about criminal justice procedures, federal and provincial statutes, and recognized the systemic barriers in Northern communities. George has an extensive background in legal issues and other social science disciplines. He worked for Tikinagan Child and Family Services as a Family Service Worker until he re-entered the legal field, where he is very passionate about First Nation justice issues. George has post-secondary education from Lakehead University and obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree and Basic Constable Training diploma from the Ontario Police College.





About the Gladue Program

WHAT IS A GLADUE REPORT?

A Gladue report is a comprehensive compilation of the unique background of an Indigenous person, which is prepared for sentencing. The Gladue report will link the life story of an Indigenous offender to the broader issues facing Indigenous people, e.g. the intergenerational trauma of residential schools and the 60s Scoop. Reports are usually 10 to 20 pages and takes 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

Know Your Rights



YOUR GLADUE RIGHTS

- All Indigenous people are entitled to a Gladue report or letter for sentencing or bail hearing.
 - Indigenous includes First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit and Metis.
- Courts must take into account the Indigenous person's life story.
 - To understand how colonization impacted the person.
- Gladue Reports are for Indigenous people who have pled guilty (or have been found guilty) of a criminal offence and is facing a sentence.
- Gladue reports are confidential and they are required to be sealed by the courts.
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- The Recommendations are public record (for probation officers, etc).
- Gladue reports are written for the judge, defense counsel and the Crown.
- They are entitled to work with a Gladue caseworker who will follow up with referral services, community support, and traditional based programming.

Meet The Gladue Team



LENNY CARPENTER

ACTING MANAGER/SENIOR GLADUE WRITER, TIMMINS

Lenny Carpenter is a member of Attawapiskat First Nation and originally from Moosonee. He is a former journalist, having served as a reporter, editor, and publisher for Wawatay News. He worked in media development while overseeing Journalists for Human Rights' Indigenous Reporters Program. He graduated from Confederation College's Film Production program in 2011. He has been with NAN Legal since 2019 as a Gladue writer.

TERRI ZOCCOLE

GLADUE CASEWORKER LEAD, THUNDER BAY

Terri is a member of Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake First Nation). She has been working with the Gladue program at NAN Legal since October 2017. She has written 29 Gladue letters and 3 Gladue reports. She has worked with over 80 clients on their healing journey.



JOYCE NWAUBANI

GLADUE WRITER, THUNDER BAY

Joyce joined the team in November 2022. She grew up in Toronto and is passionate about social justice, human rights, social change, and women's rights, especially black women's rights. Working with NAN Legal has been a positive learning experience, and is looking forward to making more memories with NAN community members.



JENNIFER STIENKE

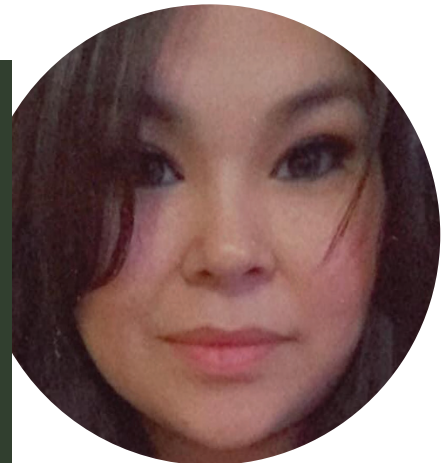
GLADUE WRITER, THUNDER BAY

Jennifer has been with the Gladue team since July 2021. She was raised in Thunder Bay. She graduated from the University of Ottawa with an Honours Bachelor of Social Science with a major in criminology and minor in psychology in 2020.

ALEXANDRIA ADAMS

GLADUE CASEWORKER, THUNDER BAY

Alexandria is an Anishnaabe Kwe from Naotkamegwaning (Whitefish Bay) First Nation. Although she was born and raised in Thunder Bay, she spent periods of her childhood and adolescence in Naotkamegwaning First Nation and Mishksiminiziibiing (Big Grassy River First Nation, where her paternal family is from. She joined the team as a Gladue Caseworker in November 2022.



BRYAN PHELAN

SENIOR GLADUE WRITER, KENORA

Bryan is Metis from the Monkman family of Lake Winnipeg. He has bachelor degrees in journalism (University of Kings College, Halifax, where he received a public service journalism award) and social work (University of Manitoba, Winnipeg). He has been a Gladue writer for Nishnabe-Aski Legal Services since 2015.



BOB ALBANY

GLADUE CASEWORKER, KENORA

My name is Robert Albany. I joined the Gladue Team in January 2020 and I am a Gladue Caseworker based in Kenora, Ontario. My work experience has been in child and family services, mental health and addictions and restorative justice. I am a proud member of Fort Severn First Nation, however, I was born in Kenora, Ontario and raised in Minaki, Ontario. I love being part of the Gladue team and I am always learning something in the work that I do. I have wonderful co-workers, who do an excellent job and are a caring group. Miigwetch.

DIANA PINE

GLADUE CASEWORKER, RED LAKE

Diana works as a Gladue caseworker for the Gladue Program since 2021. She provides pre and post-sentencing support for participants requesting Gladue reports.



LESLIE KING

GLADUE WRITER, RED LAKE

I am registered with the Pikangikum First Nation. I currently reside in WanamaniSaa'ikan (Red Lake), which is about 30 km east of Namekosipiink, which is where my parents raised me. It was a real privilege to be raised in a log cabin beside the beautiful waters of Namekosipiink. I have degrees in Indigenous Learning & Political Science. I started working for NAN Legal in August 2020, as a Gladue Writer. I had previously worked for 4 years as a Gladue Caseworker (Writer) for Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto (as it was then called).



FEATHER METATAWABIN

GLADUE WRITER, TIMMINS

Feather is a member of Kashechewan First Nation but lived in Timmins since she was 8 years old. She graduated with Honours Bachelor of Social Work in 2022. She is passionate about working with Indigenous peoples. She has been a Gladue writer since January 2023.



JERRY RODRIQUE

GLADUE CASEWORKER, TIMMINS

Jerry is a member of Fort Albany First Nation and lives in Timmins. He graduated from Algoma University in 2021 with a Political Science Degree. He enjoys helping clients with their healing journey. He has been a Gladue Caseworker since January 2023.

NOTE: 1 Gladue Caseworker Position for Timmins is vacant, and a Gladue Manager Position is vacant.



A RECENT GROUP PHOTO OF THE GLADUE TEAM (MOST OF US)

FROM BACK LEFT: LENNY, JERRY, ALEXANDRIA, TERRI, BRYAN, & FEATHER
LESLIE SITTING IN THE FRONT

**THANK YOU FOR READING
OUR NEWSLETTER!**



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