



Ardith Walkem Walpetko We'dalx

Recipient of the Bill McFarland Award for the
Advancement of Excellence in Child Welfare

Ardith Walkem is a member of the Nlaka'pamux Nation. She is a mother, a lawyer, and a committed and tireless advocate for Indigenous children and families. She has practiced in the area of Indigenous law since she was called to the Bar in 1996. She has training in interest-based mediation as well as social justice mediation, and a Master's degree (LLM) focusing on Indigenous laws. She has worked collaboratively with Indigenous communities to develop dispute resolution models based on Indigenous laws. Her focus is on finding ways to make space within the Canadian legal system for the recognition of Indigenous laws, including in the areas of child welfare and child and family wellness.

Ms. Walkem is the author of *Wrapping Our Ways Around Them: Aboriginal Communities and the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) Guidebook*. The Guidebook is based on the belief that Aboriginal peoples need to know, and work with, the systems that impact children and

families today, and suggests immediate steps that can be taken within the CFCSA and the systems that impact Aboriginal children and families to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children while building toward a better future. Ms. Walkem also facilitates Wrapping Our Ways Around Them training workshops for Aboriginal communities and service providers throughout BC.

Ms. Walkem's dedicated work as an author, facilitator and lawyer is making a positive and lasting contribution to Aboriginal children in this province by giving Aboriginal communities the information, tools and strategies to become involved in CFCSA proceedings and thereby end the isolation parents and children experience within the child welfare process and protect children from being removed from their communities.



Bill McFarland was an advocate for children throughout his life and social work career. His achievements include founder of the Alberta Foster Parents Association, the National Federation of Youth in Care Networks, and Parent Support Services Society of BC. In addition, he was a member of the Berger Commission, a consultant to the Gove Inquiry, and a recognized expert on the Young Offenders Act. Bill was appreciated by all who worked with him for his integrity, compassion and tireless efforts toward the care and welfare of all children. This award honours his memory and his tireless efforts for the care and welfare of all children.

