



MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

Accessibility Advisory Council – April 2024

John Graham, Chairperson

John is the Retail Council of Canada's Director of Government Relations (Prairie Region), and he works extensively with retailers and the broader community in support of accessibility issues. John gained an early appreciation for accessibility barriers as a youth, watching his father introduce and expand handi-van service throughout rural Manitoba on behalf of the Province. This exposure continues through family experience. As a director of a number of community and business boards, John has gained an appreciation for the importance of diversity of perspective. John is married, and through the power of adoption, enjoys the energy of their two children.

Josh Watt, Vice-Chairperson

Since 2015, Josh has served as the Executive Director for the Manitoba School Board Association. He was the former Senior Policy Advisor to the Deputy Minister of Education and Training. Josh holds a BA (Honours) in Law and Political Science from Carleton University, a Master in Public Administration from the University of Winnipeg, a Master in Education from the University of Manitoba, the Public Leadership Credential from the Harvard Kennedy School and has completed the Master Class of the Harvard/MIT Program on Negotiation. He has also completed a master level certification in peace support operations through the UN Institute for Training and Research. As a person with Asperger's Syndrome, Josh is proud to advance the cause of persons with invisible disabilities in his role on the Council.

Dianna Scarth

Dianna was the Executive Director of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission from 1996 until September 2012 and also served on the executive of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies. From 2012 to 2016, Dianna was employed at the University of Winnipeg, initially as a Visiting Professor and later as its Human Rights and Diversity Officer. Dianna's educational background is in law and social work; she obtained Master of Social Work and Bachelor of Laws degrees from the University of Manitoba. Dianna was appointed part-time Human Rights Commissioner to the Canadian Human Rights Commission for two three-year terms in 2018 and 2021.

Shawna Joynt

Shawna Joynt is a First Nations woman who is hard of hearing from the TR'ONDEK HWECHIN HAN NATION tribe in Dawson City, Yukon. She is known for her strong will,

determination, kindness, respectfulness, and her desire to become a “listener and healer.” Creating safe spaces and showing respect are especially important to her. She strongly believes in teamwork. Shawna is currently on several boards and her passion is to help remove barriers for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Indigenous people. Shawna acts as President of the Canadian Association for the Deaf (CAD/ASC); President of the Manitoba Deaf Association (MDA); Director on the Board of the Canadian Deaf Sports Association (CDSA); and President of the Manitoba Deaf Sports Association (MDSA), along with several roles on variety of committees. Shawna believes we all will work together and make sure everyone has equal rights –with time and work, we will get to that point!

Laurel Repski

Laurel is a Human Resource consultant and former Vice President of Human Resources, Audit & Sustainability at the University of Winnipeg with extensive experience in public and private sector human resource management. She is a member of CPHR Manitoba, and former Chair of the Board of Directors for both the Manitoba Children’s Museum and Manitoba Theatre for Young People. Laurel holds a certificate in Human Resource Management from the University of Manitoba.

Ray Schirle

Ray was acclaimed for a second term as Mayor for the Town of Beausejour. Ray has a passion for the good of the community, positive growth and accountability. He is a committed volunteer who serves on numerous committees, devoting time to the community and the Eastern Region. Married 24 years with two children, Ray is a self-starter and self-made, getting into business at the young age of 18 while taking Business Administration and Accounting at Red River Community College. Ray’s business involvement is varied between retail, manufacturing, development, and running a seasonal campground.

Scott Jocelyn

Scott became President and CEO of the Manitoba Hotel Association (MHA) in January 2016 and retired in 2023. A major component of Scott’s role was bringing forward the issues and concerns of hotel operators to legislators, educators, media and the general public. Before joining the MHA, Scott was Executive Director of the Manitoba Restaurant and Food Services Association for nine years.

Kristine Cowley

Kristine is an Associate Professor and Director of the Spinal Cord Research Centre in the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Manitoba. She is a current and former member of several boards and committees relating to physical accessibility, including the Standard Development Committee for the Design of Public Spaces. During her tenure as the Executive Director of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Manitoba, Inc.) (now Spinal Cord Injury Manitoba) from 1995 – 1998, she was a Member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Institute for Barrier Free Design at the University of Manitoba (1996 – 1998). She was a member of the Editorial Committee that produced “Access: A guide to accessible design for designers, builders, facility owners and managers.”

Vivi Dabee

Vivi is the Advocacy and Community Outreach Program Lead for the CNIB Manitoba Division. She currently serves on boards which promote arts and culture, and which advocate for accessibility. Vivi holds a BA English (Honours) degree from the University of Winnipeg, and a Masters of English from the University of Manitoba. She is passionate about accessibility, diversity, and inclusion. In addition to being an advocate, Vivi is a vocalist, playwright, and actor. She is co-host of the podcast The Lens: Living Diverse and is the audio-description consultant for Vocal Image Ensemble Winnipeg (VIEW). Vivi loves meeting people and hearing their stories. When she is not curled up with a good book, Vivi loves exploring all that Manitoba has to offer with her family, friends, and guide-dog companion.