

People ask me, “Why don’t you just enjoy life now instead of working so hard on reconciliation and talking about residential schools? What do you expect to achieve?” The answer is “freedom.” I am free.²⁵⁷

Later that same day, journalist Laura Robinson’s expression of reconciliation was a copy of the documentary *FrontRunners*, which she produced for APTN, about some residential school athletes who had made history. She said,

In 1967, ten teenage First Nations boys, all good students and great runners, ran with the 1967 Pan Am Games torch, from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Winnipeg, a distance of 800 kilometres, which they did successfully.... But the young men who delivered that torch to the stadium were turned away at the door. They were not allowed in to watch those games. They were not allowed to run that last 400 metres. One of them told me that he remembered being turned around, [and] put back on the bus to residential school.... In 1999, Winnipeg hosted the Pan Am Games again and the organizers realized what had happened. They tracked down the original runners, apologized, and thirty-two years later, as men in their fifties, those runners finished that 400 metres and brought the torch in....

Sport is a place that we speak a universal language—a language of shared passion for moving our bodies through time and space, with strength and skill. This summer [2014], Regina will host the North American Indigenous Games.... Let us all hope, and commit to reconcile divisiveness, racism, and stereotypes through the world of sport and support each and every young person attending those games. Because they are the frontrunners of the future.²⁵⁸

Such stories are indicative of the need for the rich history of Aboriginal peoples’ contributions to sport to become part of Canadian sport history.

On November 18, 2014, we attended an event hosted by the Law Society of Upper Canada to celebrate the first time an Aboriginal community—the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation—was to be the Host First Nation for the Pan-Parapan American Games, held in Toronto in July and August of 2015. The *FrontRunners* attended and were honoured in a traditional blanketing ceremony.²⁵⁹

Calls to Action

- 87) We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
- 88) We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.