

Sdahl 'awaas (Lucy Bell) | 2021 Sterling Prize Ceremony and Lecture: Challenging the role of museums in an era of reconciliation

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6:30 PM (PT)

Event host: SFU Public Square, SFU Office of the Vice-President Academic

Speakers: Vance Williams, Elder Margaret George, Amelia Rae, Skil Jadee White, Dr. Catherine Dauvergne, Sdahl 'awaas (Lucy Bell), Jisgang (Nika Collison), Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra

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If you have any questions about this transcript or its contents, please contact SFU Public Square at psqevent@sfu.ca.

VANCE WILLIAMS:

Good evening! Before we get started, I would like to ask everyone to (Audio breaks up).

Noise from small children, however, is highly welcomed. My name is Vance Williams,

and I am the chair of the Sterling Prize Committee. It is my pleasure to be here tonight

at the Bill Reid Gallery in downtown Vancouver as well as online to present SFU's 2021

Nora and Ted Sterling Prize in Support of Controversy

If you are joining us tonight, we have ASL and closed captioning. You can click the Live

Captions button and click "Show subtitle."

I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional lands of the x m k y m (Musqueam), S wxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), s lilw ta (Tseil-Waututh).

The Sterling Prize is unique in the world. It is the result of Nora and Ted Sterling which was established at Simon Fraser University to contribute to the understanding of controversy. I will talk a little bit more about that in a while. Before that, to open today's ceremony and start us off in a good way, I would like to invite Elder Margaret George to say a few words.

ELDER MARGARET GEORGE:

Good evening, everyone. Thank you for taking the time to come and witness what is taking place this evening. You have heard that you were on the territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh. It's a great pleasure to be here with you this evening because it has been such a long time since we have been able to gather with more than three people in a home.

Just a prayer to get this event going. Great Spirit, thank you for bringing us together this evening. -- Set each and every one of us on the path that we are on. Take our families at home and take care of our families and children. I asked the great Spirit to bless each

AMELIA REA:

I will introduce myself as well. (Speaks Indigenous language) Good people, precious friends and family, I first want to acknowledge the land that we are on today and the people who have been caregivers to this land since time immemorial and show my respect to them. My name is also Amelia. I am Haida and Roosevelt was my grandmother. -- Rosabelle was my mother. I wrote a speech on the bus. I don't know how good it is, but I will share it nonetheless. Many of you know my mom as a friend, as a colleague, but many of you have some knowledge of who she is as a person and offer humour. It's pretty good.

(Laughter)

I didn't even write that part in my speech, OK? I'm just going to stick to what I wrote.

(Laughter)

But I'm going to tell you a little bit about her as my mom. We... Oh my God, I keep changing. I'm going to tell you a little bit about her as a mom. I have watched her walk through life all of my life with grace and humour. I have watched her walk shen ctom mo thro

this part of my speech either! We went to a psychic in a mall once, she told my mom she had thousands of ancestors behind her, and she said something really similar about me, but in mine, they were all women, and they were all our grandmothers. They had long grey hair, and her skin was really wrinkly, but she said they looked really soft, and she just wanted to touch them. It looked a lot like my great, great grandmother. That is what I pictured when she described it.

Five years ago, we left our home on Haida Gwaii without knowing what the heck we were going to do. I think we were both a little lost and just not really knowing what was going to -- what our lives are going to look like. She picked us up and we figured it out. I have been the person she has come home to. People have joked that she is going to follow me to University, but I think I have just been following her around in reality.

(Laughs) And I got to witness first-hand the hurt and the struggle the last few years have brought. I also got to witness her determination to make this world a better place for all Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. All the while, with grace and a cheetah print heels, red lipstick, and a spruce in her hat. In this community that she has built around her – if you are in this room or watching us on the live stream.

She has made this path a little easier for me to walk on. I think she knows it won't be the easiest and there will be struggles, but she -- is doing her best to make it as smooth of a walk as it can be. This is for me, for all of us, her nieces, nephews, and all of her family and community of Haida Gwaii, Black, Indigenous people. She has cleared the path so that when we go into these institutions to visit the belongings of our precious ancestors,

we don't have to fear facing racism and discrimination. She has inspired much-needed change, and I look forward and hope that this comes to fruition. She is hilarious. The psychic said so. She will tell you what you need to hear. Believe me, I know that – even if you don't want to hear it.

She has done her best to push past intergenerational borders that we face as Indigenous people. She has shown me how to recognize where these come from, my family, and how we can break through them with love and grace and resilience and intergenerational power, which are all very real things as well. She reminds me it's OK to be vulnerable. Also, showing her strength and also stays true to her culture and our ceremonies. This has kept us grounded. She has taught me to walk lightly and has been an example of what it is to be a Haida woman, as shown by her mom and her grandmothers. Above all, she loves fiercely. (Speaks Indigenous language).

Skil Jadee and I are going to sing a song. Both of these were composed by (name), so (Speaks Indigenous language) To him for the use of these.

(Singing)

(Applause)

SKIL JADEE WHITE:

That was just our warm up. With COVID we haven't been able to do dance practice, so forgive us if we are rusty. The next song is called Singing Together.

(Sings)

(Applause)

VANCE WILLIAMS:

Thank you, that was beautiful. Thank you for your powerful and eloquent words. I wish I could compose things like that on the bus. And for the beautiful performance as well. I would also like to thank our dancer. Shifting gears, I would like to share a little bit of context about the sterling prize. It was founded in 93, the sterling throated description of what they hoped this price would be about. It may be awarded for work in any field, including but not limited to the fine arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and education. To be eligible for the prize, the work must be the object of or present a meaningful analysis of the conduct or consequences of controversy. However, the work must be more than simply controversial. It should present new ways of looking at the world, be daring and be creative, be decidedly unconventional. In short, the sterling prize celebrates work that challenges complacency, and it must also meet a recognizably high standard and be morbidly -- morally and ethically sound. The sterling prize committee is composed of a variety of people from the SFU community and is

meant to be broadly representative of our community. It includes students, staff, faculty and people of diverse backgrounds. The committee membership is partially renewed each year, and we have renewal because we want to ensure that fresh perspectives are always being included. I would like to thank the members of this year's prize committee for their service. A couple of them are here in person tonight. (Name) who is a member of the faculty for education, (Name) is a philosophy student at SFU. (Name) who was also with us this evening, is a faculty member in my logical sciences, and Mercer -- Mercer (Name) is a staff member from SFU (audio issues). Here, our committee meets in the early part of the year, in the spring, and we have many very interesting conversations and discussions and go through the various nominations that we have received this year. After many of these conversations, we reach a consensus on the winner. And so, with that, I would like to pass the floor to Catherine Dauvergne, SFU's vice president-- Provost and will introduce the recipient of the 2021 sterling prize in support of controversy.

(Applause)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

Thank you, Vance. Good evening to all of you joining us here tonight either in person... What a thrill it is to gather in person, this incredibly beautiful gallery. As well as those who are joining online. I am not sure if you are live streaming this event. What part of

and you need a break. You really are welcome to leave, online or in person, and come back. We welcome that, we are very happy with it. I will say it again, as Vance has mentioned that we do have closed captioning and American signer which interpretation available for this event. You can find that on the bottom of your Zooms to green. -- Screen.

I will say little bit about the topic of today's presentation. The sterling prize lecture always covers controversial topics. Some of these topics, of course, invoke really strong emotions. We want to ensure that if you are feeling upset or emotional, affected by the conversation this evening, you will find sources in the chat on the zoom screen and lots of staff with whom you can find support here in the room. If you are joining us online, you can submit your questions at any point. Using the Q&A function at the bottom of the screen. Your question will not appear on the screen but it will appear... I'm not sure how, but they tell me to a computer they will give me very shortly and then I will read them. We will trust that that will happen, because somebody wrote that down for me to say. Here in the gallery, were much more confident about more -- what will happen, you are welcome to come to the microphone and lineup to ask a question, or if you are unable to get to the microphone, just raise your hand and we will come to you. That's how the question and answer works.

And now, without further ado, I am very pleased to introduce Sdahl K'awaas, whose English name is Lucy Bell. As the recipient of the 2021 Nora and Ted Sterling Prize in Support of Controversy, her courage in calling out racism in her field and advocating for

change in an era of reconciliation, in 2020 Sdahl K'awaas resigned as the head of the Indigenous collections page creation -- page creation at the Royal Columbian -- British Columbia Museum citing racism. Since then, Sdahl K'awaas, member of the Haida nation, has called on everyone to reflect on themselves and be more accountable, anti-racist institutions. She has called on museums to reflect on their colonial legacy, to foster better relationships with Indigenous peoples and to address racism within the workplace. Sdahl K'awaas continues to support repatriation efforts while working towards her PhD at Simon Fraser University. Ignition of her work -- recognition of her work and on behalf of this darling prize committee, we would like to present Sdahl K'awaas with the 2021 Nora and Ted Sterling Prize in Support of Controversy.

(Applause)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

They have experienced a lot of racism in the past years in my work with museums and as the head of the Indigenous Collections And Repatriation Department at the Royal British Columbia Museum. It has been really hard and difficult to acknowledge that that was happening. Just to be standing up here today with all of you... This really does mean a lot to me.

I am both happy and sad to accept this award. It breaks my heart that I am up here getting an award for shit that I have to put up with. I am proud to be receiving the award for what I have had to put up with and for being acknowledged for the way that I spoke out about it. I give thanks to my nominators, Marianne, Barb, and all the many people who wrote beautiful support letters. If I have ever had a long day, I can just read those beautiful letters. And to the media who listened to me and to my story. I wanted to make a difference, and it really makes a big difference to changing the museum world.

I want to give thanks to the Sterling committee for picking me. The organizers, Seth, those for keeping me in mind. I give thanks to the Bill Reid Gallery for welcoming us in this space. And for Beth, my friend and curator here for just being here and being so open to having us.

My biggest thank you goes out to my family, my friends, to all of those who literally picked me up off the floor when I am just so (indiscernible) after listening to somebody. I give thanks to my girl for putting up with this and trusting that we are going to be OK. I am going to change direction again, and we are going to be OK. My family, my friends all over that have kept an eye on me, have walked with me, have just been there in

every way that you can, I raise my hands to all of you.

I need to acknowledge my (Speaks Indigenous language) To the ancestors, to all of the thousands of ancestors that still reside in museums. It broke my heart to leave them, to not be helping other ancestors go home, but I hope that I can do it in another way and I can still continue this work. I give thanks to my mom, who also endured a lot of racism, who went to residential school, who was scooped up in the 60s scoop, who went on to battle her own demons, quit drinking, and get a degree, her master's degree, and teach Haida language. Who put up with a lot of racism herself in the education system.

I raise my hands to my uncle. I think Amelia was saying I feel my ancestors around me all the time, and when the investigation of racism was happening and it was just too much for me, I felt then stand in front of me during the investigation and say, "Stop.

That's enough." And I stopped at the investigation, my involvement in that investigation.

I'm just so grateful to the ancestors for always being with me. I give thanks to my homeland, to Haida Gwaii. I am grateful to be able to go home, go to the beach, and be with family and with friends and do the things that make me feel good again.

I will share a little bit more about things, and then Jisgang and I will have a little bit of a conversation later. Thank you all for being here.

(Applause)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

Thank you so much for those very, very moving words. It's an honour to be in this audience this evening and be able to listen. I am really looking forward to the next part as well, where we will have Sdahl K'awaas in conversation with two respondents. In

university's race and antiracism work.

Sharanjit is a former BCM Association Council member and is currently Director of the Pacific Canada Heritage Centre Museum of Society. Her research interests involve looking at museums, critical race theory, seek migration -- Sikh migration in 20th century British Columbia, and interracial solidarity's as a movement towards antiracism. She has been collecting Sikh migration stories for more than a decade – resistance, protest, and power are the main forces from her works, including through highlighting the Sikh community as Canadian history in all its complexities and evolution. It is really a privilege now for me to turn it over to the three of you.

(Applause)

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

When we were deciding what to do, we thought it would be lovely to have a three-way conversation. Nika and I are going to be asking questions to Lucy, and then we will be exchanging questions with each other in relation to a lot of the themes that Lucy in particular has ignited and what Lucy has done in the cultural sector, in the sectors looking at reconciliation. Afterwards, there will be a Q&A from the audience, so we hope that we will be able to answer some questions from you as well.

is, "What made you speak out, and why do you think people listen to you?"

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

I worked at that Museum for 3.5 years, and I noticed there was a difference in the way I was being treated. Things relating to pay, to assumptions made of me and Indigenous people. It kept wearing me down, wearing me down, and I didn't quite know what to do with that. I didn't want to admit to myself that it was racism. That was really heartbreaking to admit to myself, and what was happening at the time when I decided that that was enough, my daughter Amelia out there sleeping in the legislature with all these other Indigenous youth fighting for their rights of our land and Black Lives Matter was happening. Other museum people were speaking out.

I was like... Shit, this is racism! It just really, really broke my heart that that was what was happening, and in the last months when I did decide that I needed to step away, I was asked to put my PhD or take a demotion. I had a curator say that the Haida's treat the Museum like a grocery store when asking for two masks out of 2000 belongings.

I had another executive member's antiracist workshop say that it was science that Indigenous people can't handle alcohol. Those were just in the few months of my job there, and I just had to say that it was enough for me for my own well-being. I had to get away from all of that.

Why did people listen? I don't know if I can answer that. There was a farewell party that was held for me, and when the CEO (indiscernible) was leaving to pursue my PhD and

to take care of my health, I said that was not exactly the reason why I was leaving, and I spoke my truth. I think that's why people listen to me.

I gave a list of some of the experiences. I didn't name any names. I wasn't out to be

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

I didn't speak to (indiscernible) from the media, and I am grateful for the people who wanted to listen and not be so caught up in making it a big drama. Not putting me on display. I refused to say any names, even though they pushed me. I am grateful for the people who wrote those kind stories. Sharanjit Mac -- Sharanjit Mac

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

What about nationwide? I feel like there was this ripple effect that happened after? Do you feel that as well?

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

Listening to you speak at the BCMA conference, and finding other Indigenous people of colour going through the same experiences, we seemed to find each other. And I think during COVID times, being able to Zoom q bein` D M M

space can feel the energy of that space that is welcoming. It does take one person to take the risk to speak out. Right? To create controversy. And then from that controversy, comes accountability, perhaps. And change. Absolutely. Do you feel justice has been served?

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL)

seen by the

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

The last time we talked I thought there was a moderator, but I have it up anyway. It's weird to see you on the screen and see a lag, so I'm just going to cover up the screen.

(Speaks Indigenous Language) what are your hopes for the future of Indigenous and Haida (unknown term).

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

I'm optimistic, I would like to think it's going to get better because of us uniting and taking a stand for other people in museums, not just the Indigenous people of colour, but everybody to make change and committing to making a change and doing better and questioning themselves every day. My hope is that we can stop just saying, "Oh it is just systemic racism." Or, "Oh, it's the union." It is people that work at these institutions that create that. We are the ones that create systemic racism, we are the ones that have to change it. My hope is that we as Indigenous people can strengthen the invisible ties that we have to our belongings, to the ancestors, to their belongings that are in museums. I hope that my speaking out is creating a space for my girl, for my nieces, my nephews, but it is to have... To claim their space in these institutions and to claim our belongings, you know, for our kids to be going out there and getting those 12,000 Haida belongings and to not be faced with racism and a closed door.

Good answer, Nika?

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

(Speaks Indigenous Language)

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

The next question is for Nika.

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

Jisgang, we have been working in repatriation together for almost 30 years, girl. Some museums have been more challenging than others. How have these experiences strengthened Haida repatriation?

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

Do you have two hours? OK, so... Lou, you know your guidance over these almost 30 years as we started this work when we were seven, you know you have been my guiding light. We have been through a lot together, and I think a really good example of our experiences and how they have strengthened the Haida repatriation movement is... We started out in bringing our relatives home, as you gathered us together, our elders and hereditary leaders and elected leaders, they understood and supported you and our greater work.

They created a letter, from our national government, or our Nation, stating that

repatriation is not the substance of treaties. Because back in early 2000, that was the answer we got. It stated that this is about making relationships, and our nation mandated it -- us to do the work of repatriation with the goal of mutual respect, cooperation and trust.

great difficulty

The thing is because of the wisdom of our nation, mandating us to conduct ourselves with (Speaks Indigenous Language) and to treat others with it as Lucy talked about, that means that we do invite these people that our elders has -- have also advised, the people working in museums now, it is not their fault that our relatives and belongings are in that museum. Whichever it is. But we cannot... You know, hold a grudge against them. But if they are not doing something, then yes, they have inherited their ancestors legacy and are promoting it.

So in order to educate, we have to have... Immersion. Kind of like us learning our language again. That means having open space for our museum friends, or friends to experience. And that means sharing and allowing them to see our joy, our laughter, our tears, our anger as we get ready to prepare our relatives to bring them home as we see our belongings removed from Haida Gwaii in unethical ways. Through acts of cultural genocide.

The one place where we don't bring people and is where we prepare our ancestors, but in doing all that work together, we get to know each other on a real level. The two days before we left, my dear friend, my now dear friend, said, "Nico, --Nika, Get your committee to smuggle food in." I shouldn't be telling the story, but I will anyway. I asked what for

next morning, we had to be waiting outside at 5 AM to get in the bus and go to the airport, and the bus was picking up our ancestors from the museum at 4 AM, and our cousin Vince... If I recall correctly, he went with the bus to go get them. But when the bus came back, our friend from the museum... Because we had become museum -- friends by then, I got of

society, greater Canadian society, and global society. I started in repatriation at the same time as my Canadian Museum mentor. Natalie McFarland tricked me into working in our Museum, and I am ever grateful for that as well. Having to figure out, you know, to go, "Why?" Why are those boxes in bones and museums? This stuff is not taught in Western school systems very well. And sometimes, not at all.

So that caused a need to look back and better understand these times that even our own people didn't speak too much about because of the harm done. And arming – arming ourselves with knowledge like that allows us to learn the truth, the real truth of the history of Indigenous peoples and the formation of the colonial government of Canada. It allows us to share that truth and help others learn about it, and then when we do it with compassion and do it with the dignity you spoke of, the kindness while still telling the truth, it helps people learn and find their own grief, their role in society. They find that grief, and they can find ways to heal independently and with us.

All of that learning has created Haida museology. We are looking forward to your thesis developing that even more, and supporting the building of Indigenous museology for sure.

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

Final question. Are museums in the heritage field showing more respect and changing? Do you feel that they are changing and showing more respect?

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

Yes and no. We have made so many incredible true friends and dear colleagues over these 20+ years, almost 30 years, and in that time, it has taken us well over \$1 million to do this work. It's not a job. It's a way of life. I can't even begin to actually calculate the hours put into this by our dear people.

So on the one hand, we have made some incredible friends that get stuck in these colonial systems because that is what these institutions are, so they are trying. You know, we have friends that are really trying to make a difference, but even in the last three years, I have been asked to do external contracts where the time period to get the work done was shortened, but the same amount of work existed, and then that Museum a person said, "I know we offer you this much money, but can we take \$2000 off that contract? We are a little -- short on cash."

My answer to that at the time was that I have over 20 years experience in the field of arts and culture. I have 20 years of experience in duration and 46, at the time, as a Haida. You tell me if you can take that money off my contract. Three days after our ancestors were revealed in Kamloops, I was called by our friends to ask if they could remove the special characters – I don't know the proper name for it – for my name for something that was to be published. They started off with, "Sorry, I know this is a really bad time to ask, but we are in a bit of a crunch." And I said, "You were asking me to spell my name wrong. This is 2021."

"Well, if we don't remove it, we are going to have to go back and ask the other

Thanks, Nie pms ever asOr did Id"- ° ioð

Indigenous authors." And I said, "Good!" "Are you sure?" "Yes, you are asking me to spell my name wrong. You cannot do that anymore."

It's a dichotomy. I don't know if I even used the right word, but there are harms every single day when you are an Indigenous museologist. When I had to close my Museum on March 18, I immediately hated it. I live to do my job to make a better future for our children, but I hated it, and it took me about three months to figure out why, because that was confusing. It was from all the harm, 20+ years of harm that all of us experience daily for museums, whether the people are becoming woke or trying to be. There is so much to be undone.

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

Thanks, Nika.

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

So it's my turn to ask you a question! Or did I mess up? No?

(Laughter)

I also have variegated glasses or whatenowα

Facebook as well.

They did an apology

That is great. And what do you expect going forward in terms of truth telling?

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

I was telling Nika that I see this in you as well. The (indiscernible) exhibit is beyond me because I have zero grace. Let me tell you, I have no grace when it comes to publicly calling out institutions. Lucy said something to me, and she said, "But that is you, and that is beautiful, and we also need people who can be really aggressive and really loud." The world needs different types of people using different methods to enact change, so if there are the Nikas and the Lucys of the world during this amazing work through great power, and there are also Sharanjits, four of the world publicly calling out and people of the world. Just doing it in a different way, but our role is just the same. I truly do believe that we have the duty to create more equitable spaces of belonging in museums in particular.

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

That is a big thing I have been thinking about him listening to you. We need the loud ones. We need that. We need "In your face" and the things that we are trying to do otherwise, and the one thing I would say I have been thinking about is apathy. Isn't apathy racism?

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

And you know the other thing is you even mentioned the tragedy of Kelowna. One thing that frustrates me is when people empathize by only being able to relate to their lived experiences. "What if that had been my children?" We have to get ourselves away from

PhD's, so we have that in common. Something that comes up a lot is the talk about critical race theory, and I would like to hear – maybe you can educate us all, but what the heck is that? Why is that important? Tell us.

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

I'm not going to take too long to answer this, but in the US in particular, critical race theory is being attacked, right? The theory, the understanding of respecting this knowledge base is being attacked. For me, critical race theory is about power and challenging power.

What you did in telling your truths was a moment of critical race theory because you chose the moment to share your narratives and your truths. We live in a world and work in institutions that are based on a lot of problematic enlightenment models – even the entire project of the medium came out of that theft, out of James Cook, Christopher Columbus, and even universities are a problematic structure. We continue to see those structures work off of knowledge that discredited and racialized people mostly – Indigenous people, black people, people of colour. Critical race theory totally puts that on its head and says, "Stories matter." Stories are just as important as your reach, your data collection, your stats. The stories of people's experiences are riddled with their own complexity, their own power, and they have just as much value. For me, critical race theory in the museum is really about creating a museum that exists for all of us based on our story, based on us being able to tell those stories. That is how I use "critical race

theory".

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

I think that if the questions, if you have anything else you want to say?

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

I would love to hear if people in the audience have any questions.

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very welcome to do that. I am having trouble not getting emotional reading them, but that is a minor concern, so do feel free to send them in. Our microphone is available, if people in the audience would like to line up and ask the question.

In the meantime, I'm going to choose from the rich list of questions that I have in front of me. OK, here is a question and a comment combined. And I think that all of you in museology will understand some of this that I don't understand. Thank you for sharing your words and your knowledge. Do you think Canada would repatriate from -- benefit from repatriation policies similar to (unknown term) in the United States or is it best to rely on the goodwill of museums and establish those relationships like you have both spoken about? What is the way forward for Canada?

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

Are you looking at me?

(Laughter)

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LT

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

I think this comes up a lot and it is a very loaded answer. Once again, the burden is on and off -- asked to figure out how people who do not have lived the experiences can be allies. I think the first step is to be ready to be uncomfortable. Be ready to not always be right, even though the intentions may be right. I think the word intention gets thrown around to silence a lot of Indigenous or Black people of colour. First really needs to be understanding experience, understanding pain, our resilience, our power, then moving forward and not censoring yourself. It is not your -- it is not about your fragility, it is what you do to empower those around you. That would be my answer, I think.

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

I had a good one in my head and then I forgot what it was. But yes, we get this all the time. I think the greatest act that people can start off with to become allies is to educate yourselves. There is a lot of information out there that has been generated by Indigenous people, Indigenous nations by scholars, Indigenous Western scholars. Take that opportunity, it is a privilege to have access to so many wise words. And then to become an accomplice, educate others, don't stand by when you see things happen. Speak up. Apathy, you know, that is the question I asked earlier. Is it apathy racism? You don't have to answer. That is food for thought.

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

Jisgang. I remember you telling me about becoming an Ally to LGBT and how much work... You didn't know how much work that would be. Maybe you could speak to that.

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

When you are from a marginalized group of people, for me anyway, I never thought about being an ally in the sense of needing to be an ally. And with LGBTQ2s+ or the Two-spirit world, I assumed I was an ally. A lot of my family lives within the world, we are a Two-spirit family, I have a transgender son I am so proud of and his sister who supports him like the rest of our community.

So when it becomes closer to home, so deeply a part of your life, at least for me, I realized I needed to learn a lot more. I thought I was an ally because people are just people, they are just part of our life, but I was not an ally. I was... I was like people that are not our allies, I realized.

I feel very privileged to learn, and I have a lot to learn. Both with all sorts of backgrounds, the Two-spirit community, the LGBTQ+ and so much to learn about our own Indigenous history with gender and sexual orientation and to have a jaw-dropping moment when I realized that it is not just... There are so many things that the colonial project did to destroy our identity, to fracture it, if they cannot kill us, they may as well kill our identity.

I never thought about the fact that it was the church. I wish I could remember the

Many thanks for a really impactful discussion, and I think I'm going to choose one final question. Just to choose a really good one...

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

Yeah, the pressure is on.

(Laughter)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

But nobody else can really see the list, so you know... I should be able to cope with it. There is just such an array here. So here is an interesting question, a bit complicated and possibly controversial. "Museums are institutions, and as such, are largely – with the exception of (indiscernible) that ethically and morally required to be repatriated, but (indiscernible) retainers of cultural artifacts divorced from their cultural context. What are your thoughts about a future that is integrated within original or (indiscernible) dynamic cultural contexts? Would museology be able to continue (?) in those institutions?"

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

I don't think you need belongings to tell a story of people, and almost all Indigenous belongings are in storage. Almost 95-97% of our belongings are in storage, so museums really don't need our belongings. I would rather see them have current

belongings, you know? Something that somebody today has created for a purpose, not that it was stolen or taken under duress to tell our story, a fragmented story.

(Applause)

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

I think part of that is also flipping the question on its head to say museology itself can be changed. There is no homogenous way that museology needs to continue going forward as well. That always opens the question to completely flip it on its head. Yeah, absolutely.

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

Nika, did you want the last word?

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

(Laughs) The museums should be responding to and driving society in a good way. Effective museums have people taking action. That is what museums should be striving for, not for making money off our belongings. You know, I always worry that I'm going to hurt our museum friends when I say things like that, but I think people when they know they are doing real work and the true work, they are not going to get their feelings hurt. They are going to nod their heads with us.

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

Thank you so much for... Oh! We have an in-person question! Please go ahead.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Sorry, I am a little late. I had to really think about that. Hi, Nika, Sharanjit, and Lucy. She is my sister-in-law, so I am feeling pretty proud to be here today.

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

She just got her first vaccination to be here today.

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

Off the record!

(Laughter)

QUESTION FROM FLOOR:

My name is Lacey, and I am always honoured to listen to Lucy and learn so much. I guess I have one question. Is there anything that we can learn from the pandemic in terms of how quickly we might be able to change policy? I just wanted to ask that question.

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

Thank you so much.

SHARANJIT KAUR SANDHRA:

Zoom existed before the pandemic, Skype existed, but for some reason we thought we couldn't see each other! We would be in all different places across the world, and now we can share stories and feel uplifted. I think that is a very beautiful way of enlarging our community across Canada. (Indiscernible) policy per se, but we also have to build a community across Canada through experiences, and for me, the pandemic has allowed me to do that. Zoom has...

(Laughter)

SDAHL K'AWAAS (LUCY BELL):

No, you got it. Nika, anything else?

JISGANG (NIKA COLLISON):

No, only that I am grateful for Zoom. I used to be a real princess before then and refuse, so I like it now.

(Laughter)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

(Audio breaks up) We are so grateful right now to be actually able to be in a room with other people. It might be that we will gather more lessons once we are in a place where we can, you know, -- reflect back on learnings and the joy of returning is not so fresh. We will be able to think about how we integrate these. At least, I hope so.

Our formal part of our evening is coming to a close. I understand that I am looking at the two of you, Skil Jadee and Amelia. I understand that you are prepared if we ask nicely to offer us a closing song?

SKIL

SKIL JADEE WHITE:

What do we do? Can we go down? Thank you, Seth.

AMELIA REA:

Can you hear me? This one is just a little bit quieter than the other one. We are going to do two songs. Again, this first one was composed in 1910, when three men graduated from a boarding school. One of them was my great, great grandfather, chief Willie Matthews. We use it as our graduation song and use it in celebration.

I apologize. It might take us a second.

(Laughter)

(Singing)

(Applause)

SKIL JADEE WHITE:

OK, we are going to close off with a fun song. This one is going to be (Unknown Name), and it was composed by... (name)... Yeah, OK.

(Singing)

(Applause)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

Thank you so much, thank you so much for that music and for being here this evening. There is no doubt in anyone's mind in this room that you have made this night so much richer by your presence and your energy and your youth. It really helps. Please join me one more time in acknowledging and celebrating this year's recipient of the sterling prize.

(Applause)

DR CATHERINE DAUVERGNE:

That concludes the formal part of the evening. Please continue to celebrate and enjoy being here together, and for those of you online, we hope that you will find some way to enjoy, and continue to enjoy your evenings in your own homes. Good night, everyone.