Dr. Pamela Palmater

Mi’kmaw lawyer, professor at Ryerson University, author, and social justice activist
Dr. Pam Palmater is a Mi'kmaw lawyer, professor, author, and social justice activist from Eel River Bar First Nation in New Brunswick. She has four university degrees, including a BA from St. Thomas in Native Studies; an LLB from University of New Brunswick, and her Masters and Doctorate in Law from Dalhousie University specializing in Indigenous law. She currently holds the position of full Professor and Chair in Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University.

A practicing lawyer for 22 years, Pam has been volunteering and working in First Nation issues for over 30 years on a wide range of issues like socio-economic conditions, Aboriginal and treaty rights, and legislation impacting First Nations. Her books, Indigenous Nationhood: Empowering Grassroots Citizens and Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity, and her other publications focus on Indigenous law, politics, and governance and the importance of native sovereignty and nation-building.

Pam was one of the spokespeople and public educators for the Idle No More movement and advocates alongside other movements focusing on social justice and human rights.

She is frequently called as a legal expert before Parliamentary and United Nations committees dealing with laws and policies impacting Indigenous peoples. Her current research focuses on police racism, abuse and sexualized violence against Indigenous women and girls and its contribution to the crisis of murdered, missing, traded, and exploited Indigenous women and girls.

Pam is a well-known public speaker and media commentator – considered one of Canada’s Top 25 Influential Movers and Shakers by the Financial Post and the Top 5 Most Influential Lawyer in Human Rights by Canadian Lawyer Magazine. She has been recognized with many awards for her social justice advocacy on behalf of First Nations generally, and Indigenous women and children specifically, including the 2012 YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in Social Justice, 2012 Women’s Courage Award in Social Justice, and the Margaret Mead Award in Social Justice 2016, to name a few.

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