

## Tourism Task Force | Member Biographies



### **TAMARA VROOMAN, CHAIR**

#### **PRESIDENT & CEO, VANCOUVER AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

As President & CEO of Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR), a world-class hub with local roots, Tamara Vrooman understands the value of having an airport that is both an economic generator and community contributor—a hub of innovation that gives back, supports the region and sets the bar for sustainability.

Prior to joining YVR, Tamara served for 13 years as the President & CEO of Vancity, Canada's largest community credit union. She assumed leadership of Vancity at the beginning of the global financial crisis and transformed the business and service model, delivering record profitability and doubling its assets. During her tenure, Vancity became a global reference point, and she became a leading voice in the Canadian and international financial sectors, demonstrating a successful new vision for values-based banking. This experience, combined with her comprehensive understanding of YVR gained by her previous nine-year tenure on our Board, make her the perfect leader to guide our team as we reimagine YVR's role as a world-class, sustainable hub.

Tamara currently serves as Simon Fraser University's 12<sup>th</sup> Chancellor and chairs the board of the Rick Hansen Foundation, in addition to other board roles. She is the recipient of the Order of British Columbia (2019), Peter Lougheed Award for Leadership in Public Policy (2016) and BC CEO of the Year Award – Major Private Company, Business in Vancouver (2015) among many other citations.



### **GLENN MANDZIUK**

#### **PRESIDENT & CEO, THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION**

Glenn is the President and CEO of the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Region and has over 25 years' experience as recognized leader in sustainable destination management and community economic development. Glenn has extensive leadership and experience on several product development projects, business retention programs, local, regional, provincial, national, and international partnership development programs, and innovative marketing initiatives. He has a further 10 years' experience in the hospitality industry in family owned and operated hotels and resorts and holds a master's degree of Environmental Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Leisure and Tourism Management.

He has received numerous awards including the 2-time recipient of the World Travel Award for Responsible Tourism; World Travel and Tourism Council Tourism for Tomorrow Leader Award for Sustainable Destination Management; Global Place Marketing Award, Economic Developer of the Year for both BC and Canada; and Indigenous Partner of the Year Award. Glenn has been very active on a variety of international, national, provincial, regional, and local boards including currently Vice-Chair of the BC Tourism Minister's Engagement Council, Chair of the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, and Director on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. Glenn has delivered numerous keynote presentations around the world and is published for his work on Ecotourism.



## **RICHARD PORGES**

### **INTERM PRESIDENT & CEO, DESTINATION BC**

Richard Porges is Destination BC's Interim President and CEO, and previously served as the corporation's Vice President of Corporate Development. Richard joined the corporation's research department in 1999 and moved to progressively more senior roles within the provincial government and Destination BC.

As Vice President of Corporate Development, Richard provided strategic leadership for Destination BC's corporate communications, research and analytics, human resources, and corporate services departments. Before joining Destination BC, Richard taught in the Economics, MBA and MPA programs at the University of Victoria, and was a consultant for several government and non-profit organizations.



## **INGRID JARRETT**

### **PRESIDENT & CEO, BC HOTEL ASSOCIATION**

The first-ever female President and CEO of the British Columbia Hotel Association (BCHA), Ingrid Jarrett is an industry powerhouse who has spent the past three decades directly contributing to building the tourism sector across BC and Canada.

Her impressive resume spans leadership roles at organizations like Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Watermark Beach Resort along with volunteer work in leadership positions on several Tourism Boards including Tourism Victoria, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) and Destination British Columbia (DBC).

Today, Ingrid channels her extensive knowledge and acute insights into supporting, and advocating for, members of the hotel industry province-wide, and leading the hospitality sector out of crisis caused by COVID-19.

## **WALT JUDAS**

### **CEO, TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF B.C.**



Walt has been involved in the tourism industry for nearly 30 years, having worked at BC PavCo, Port Metro Vancouver and Tourism Vancouver prior to joining the Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) in May 2015. As CEO, Walt leads multiple advocacy/policy files, sets the strategic course for TIABC, builds relationships with members and industry stakeholders, and communicates the value of B.C.'s visitor economy to various constituents.

Before TIABC, Walt spent 15+ years at Tourism Vancouver as Vice President of Marketing Communications, Membership and Sport. Over the years, Walt has held dozens of board and committee positions. At present, he is on tourism program advisory committees for both Capilano University and Vancouver Community College. He also serves on the City of Vancouver's Sport Hosting Grant Committee, and until recently was Treasurer of the Better Transit and Transportation Coalition.

Walt holds a Bachelor of Hospitality Management Degree from Vancouver Community College, as well as a Diploma in Broadcast Communications from the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

Having visited over 40 countries, Walt loves to travel and especially enjoys visiting communities around British Columbia to meet with tourism colleagues. For fun he plays hockey and golf, runs 25 kilometers a week to stay fit, and enjoys spending time with family and friends.



**NANCY SMALL**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, TOURISM RICHMOND**

Originally from St. John’s Newfoundland, Nancy has worked all over the world – including stints in The Netherlands, Toronto and Sydney, Australia. With an extensive background in the tourism industry, she specializes in strategic planning, destination management, stakeholder development and marketing strategy. Nancy’s experience outside the tourism industry includes senior-level executive roles in the retail sector, advertising agencies, and in high tech. She also has been a board member with several organizations including the BC American Marketing Association and the Burnaby Board of Trade.

Nancy is very active in the tourism industry and in the Richmond community – and is the current chair of the BC Destination Marketing Association, co-chair of the Metro Vancouver Tourism & Hospitality Response & Recovery Task Force, a member of the Metro Vancouver Destination Development Steering Committee, a member of the Richmond Community Task Force for Covid, and is the chair of the KPU President’s Advisory Council for its Richmond Campus.

She is passionate about all things Richmond and loves its diversity of food, the biking trails, culture and shopping.



**ROD HARRIS**

**BOARD MEMBER, PAVCO; MAPLE LEAF ADVENTURES; UVIC REAL ESTATE PROPERTIES**

**ASSOCIATE FACULTY MEMBER, ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY**

Rod Harris is a respected leader in the Canadian tourism industry. Inducted into the Canadian Tourism Hall of Fame in 2011, Harris led Tourism British Columbia for more than 16 years. During that time Tourism BC won multiple awards, including gold medals from the Canadian Direct Marketing Association and the Pacific Asia Travel Association.

Prior to serving as CEO of Tourism British Columbia, he was a senior executive with major Canadian marketing and advertising companies such as MacLaren Advertising and John Labatt Limited. He was also responsible for marketing the leading brands of such multinational corporations as Colgate-Palmolive, Sara Lee and Lever Brothers based in Toronto.

Rod Harris is an associate faculty member at Royal Roads University and is a visiting professor at MCI (Management Center Innsbruck) in Austria. His teaching focus is on corporate financial management, having also taught business management, governance, strategic planning and marketing in Canada and internationally. In addition to running a private consulting practice, Harris provides executive coaching for senior corporate managers.

Harris holds a Bachelor of Commerce and an MBA, with a major in marketing, from the University of British Columbia. He also has professional certification from the Institutes of Canadian Advertising the Rotman School for Corporate Governance.



**AMY THACKER**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CARIBOO CHILCOTIN COAST TOURISM ASSOCIATION**

Amy Thacker, Chief Executive Officer of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism, has a strong passion for rural tourism and economic development. Thacker holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with majors in Project Management and Operations Management. She wrote and successfully implemented the first GeoTourism program in British Columbia encompassing parts of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains and Thompson Okanagan.

Since joining the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, she has led destination management, including award-winning programs such as the Gold Rush Trail, Great Bear Rainforest and Cariboo Reputation Recovery collaboratives. A founding member of the BC Tourism Emergency Management Committee and the BC Regional Tourism Secretariat, Thacker looks forward to continued improvement in tourism emergency management.

A certified Emergency Information Officer she has successfully led her team through wildfires, floods and industrial disasters and piloted the creation of BC's first Regional Tourism Emergency Management program resulting in the creation of Tourism Emergency Program Coordinators in all regions.



**GAVIN MCGARRIGLE**

**WESTERN REGIONAL DIRECTOR, UNIFOR**

Gavin McGarrigle has been involved in the labour movement since he helped lead an organizing drive at the restaurant where he worked as a server in 1998. He was born in Derry, Northern Ireland and was raised in Canada and the Republic of Ireland before settling in B.C. He went on to be elected President of Local 4234, then First Vice-President of Local 114, and has worked as a National Representative since 2006.

Gavin has also worked as the B.C. Area Director since Unifor's founding and since then has serviced members across many sectors including hospitality, aerospace, transit, transportation, and container trucking.



**BRENDA BAPTISTE**

**CHAIR, INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF B.C.**

Brenda builds capacity and opportunity with the belief that tourism can balance socioeconomic development for Indigenous people. A member of the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), Brenda graduated as a Registered Nurse specializing in Indigenous health, with a focus on community development. Brenda worked with OIB on the marketing and development of NK' mip Desert Cultural Centre and was responsible for project planning, product and program development, marketing, fundraising, and management for the 12-million-dollar capital project.

Brenda was Director, Aboriginal Business Showcase for the Four Host Nations at the 2010 Olympics. She has also held the position of Chief Administration Officer for the Tsleil Waututh First Nation, where she worked with the leadership, staff, and community in the areas of economic, social and community development, and administration and governance. Brenda actively promotes tourism as a foundation for socioeconomic development for Indigenous communities.



**STEPHANIE SMITH**

**PRESIDENT, BC GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE EMPLOYEES' UNION**

As president of the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, Stephanie Smith represents more than 80,000 members who work in virtually every community and economic sector in BC including tourism, hospitality and gaming.

Stephanie was elected president of the BCGEU in 2014 and acclaimed to a second term in 2017. She is the first woman ever elected president of the BCGEU and the first BCGEU president to come from outside direct government service. An early childhood educator by education and profession, Stephanie's career as a union activist began in New Zealand and continued when she moved back to Canada in 1984. She has occupied almost every elected position in the BCGEU since becoming a member in 1996.

Stephanie is a lifelong feminist and a renowned advocate for building union density across sectors, supporting robust public services, and promoting the values of reconciliation, equity, and inclusion in everything she does.