



Symposium | 2025

Empowering Capacity, Confidence and Voice Through the Connections We Make

A symposium to bring women and gender diverse people together in a supportive environment; to network, dialogue, collaborate and learn from one another.



**Friday,
March 7, 2025
5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

**Saturday,
March 8, 2025
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

REGISTER HERE:

<https://memberlink.mbteach.org/Event.axd?e=2822>



Overview 2025

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is pleased once again to welcome you to our annual Women's Symposium. This year's theme, the inspirational stories you will hear, and the women you will meet underscore the importance of having women involved in all areas of union work; from leadership to political action.

Dates: Friday March 7th, 2025
Saturday March 8th, 2025

Location: The Manitoba Teachers' Society
191 Harcourt St. Winnipeg, MB
Arnett Auditorium

Fee: \$100 for Members
\$150 for Non-Members

Description: The Manitoba Teachers' Society recognizes our history as a settler organization on these lands; the lands of the Anishinabe, Ininiwak, Anishinini (wak), Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis nation.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society respects the Treaties were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and present, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with the Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

On Saturday March 8th, we invite all participants to either dress or bring a picture of themselves available to share that best exemplifies how they 'power dress'. This is meant to be a voluntary and fun addition to the symposium that might spark some interesting discussions.

Friday, March 7 | 2025

- 5:00 p.m. Registration and light refreshments
- 6:00 – 6:15 p.m. **Opening Remarks** – Cynthia Taylor, Vice President of The Manitoba Teachers' Society
- 6:15 – 7:15 p.m. **Opening Keynote** – Kate Davis. Comedian, Actress, Writer, Author
Connecting Through Humor: Why Laughter Means Business in the Digital Age
- 7:15 – 9:00 p.m. Refreshments and networking

Saturday, March 8 | 2025

- 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Registration and light breakfast
- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Fireside Chat with Kate Davis, Anna Rothney and Kemlin Nembhard
- 10:00 - 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. **Power Dressing; Is That Still a Thing?**
Dr. Christine Higgins, President of The Costume Museum of Canada
Women have portrayed and celebrated their roles in society through their clothing since the dawn of time. What and who has influenced their choices? Is power dressing a historical phenomenon, or still influential today?
- 11:15 - 12:15 p.m. **Morning Breakout Sessions**
- 1. Drawing Parallels Between Education and Politics**
Tracy Karuhogo and Christabel Ofori – Equal Voice
 - 2. ArtAlive: Women's Voices in Contemporary Art**
Dawn Knight – Educator and President of The Manitoba Association of Art Education
- 12:15 - 1:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:15 - 2:15 p.m. **Afternoon Breakout Sessions**
- 1. Drawing Parallels Between Education and Politics**
Tracy Karuhogo and Christabel Ofori – Equal Voice
 - 2. ArtAlive: Women's Voices in Contemporary Art**
Dawn Knight – Teacher and President of The Manitoba Association of Art Education
- 2:15 - 2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:30 - 3:00 p.m. Closing Activity

Friday, March 7th



**Kate Davis | Connecting Through Humor:
Why Laughter Means Business in the Digital Age**

It's never been easier to communicate and never been harder to connect. Between emails, virtual meetings, social media, it's no wonder that burnout, stress and loneliness are at all-time highs, and trust is at an all-time low.

Maybe we just need to lighten up.

Research shows that laughter and levity are some of the most powerful ways to build meaningful connections, increase trust, reduce stress, and enhance employee engagement and performance.

In this engaging and enlightening keynote, veteran comedian Kate Davis demystifies what makes us laugh and provides practical techniques for using humor to truly make an impression whether it's with clients, customers, co-workers, family, or friends. Participants will laugh their way through lessons on bringing more levity into the workplace and using humor to build trust with clients and colleagues. Most importantly, they'll better understand the power that humor has on human connection which inspires and motivates people to truly live to their fullest potential.

Saturday, March 8th

FIRESIDE CHAT

Our guests will be joining us to share their perspectives on a variety of timely topics about leadership, the importance of having women's voices at the decision-making table and why it is so important to support women in their advocacy work.



Kate Davis
Comedian,
Actress, Writer,
Author



Kemlin Nembhard
Executive Director
of the Women's
Health Clinic



Anna Rothney
Executive Director
of The Manitoba
Federation of Labour

Presenter Bios/Session Descriptors



Kate Davis | Speaker, comedian, writer, mother and actress, Kate Davis has the unique ability to find humour in any situation and offer creative solutions to defuse the frustrations in the home and workplace. Kate's generous insight and outspoken character provide a powerful combination to help organizations empower their staff with effective tools for managing stress and sustaining motivation.

Theatrically trained in England, Kate returned to Canada to a successful run on the Canadian stage. From the theatrical stage to the many stages of motherhood, Kate found her newest passion at an open mic one night at a local comedy club. Now, a twelve-time nominee at the Canadian Comedy Awards including the prestigious Phil Hartman Award and the star of her own hour-long comedy special on CTV and the Comedy Network.

Kate has appeared on Breakfast Television, Star TV, Toronto 1, Prime, WTN, TVO and CBC Radio One, "The Debaters". As well Kate was at the Winnipeg Comedy Festival, The Hubcap Comedy Festival and the Kitchener Waterloo Comedy Festival. Kate has also shared the stage with Lewis Black and Seth Meyers and is also a favorite at corporate events. Kate tours globally with her comedy and speaking which has allowed her to open for President Bill Clinton and Barbara Walters to name a few. During the 2008 season of Last Comic Standing, Kate's sense of humour endured and carried her into the finals in Canada. Kate has two comedy albums out "House Arrest" and her latest one "Tested Positive". Kate stars, writes and produces her hit web series "Best Before" which also won at the Canadian Comedy Awards and was chosen for Standup and Pitch at the Just For Laughs Comedy Pro.

Kate has been published in Today's Parent magazine and the Mom and Caregiver magazine. She has written two books; The Breast Feeding Diaries, which won the iparent media award and 2nd Best Mom - Stories, Tips and Okay Advice.



Dr. Christine Higgins | Dr. Higgins is the President of The Costume Museum of Canada. This is Canada's oldest museum dedicated to creating learning and involvement opportunities through the collections, preservation and interpretation of apparel and objects over time. Chris recently retired from a career as an adult educator and has been an adjunct instructor at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education for the past sixteen years.



Tracy Karuhogo | Tracy is a policy analyst, community advocate, and founder of the *Black Girl Talk Collective*, a non-profit organization that empowers Black women by fostering skill-sharing, community building, and self-advocacy in all industries and at all levels of government. Originally from Uganda, Tracy moved to Canada in 2019 and holds a degree in Psychology. Her work is deeply rooted in addressing systemic inequities through an intersectional lens, focusing on the experiences of marginalized groups, particularly women and Black communities.

Tracy has actively contributed to anti-racism and equity efforts in Winnipeg through initiatives such as the *Black Advisory Committee for Kids Help Phone*, *Black History Manitoba*, as well as mental health advocacy. She is also the host of *The Black Girl's Perspective*, a YouTube show that centers conversations around Black women's experiences in politics, social issues, and culture, creating a platform to amplify voices and share solutions.

Additionally, Tracy is a vocal advocate for youth engagement and women's rights, speaking regularly at events on topics ranging from inclusion to systemic barriers impacting Black communities. In recognition of her impactful work, Tracy has been named one of *Canada's Top 100 Black Women to Watch* (2023) and is the recipient of the *Women Empowerment Award* (2024).

Tracy, along with Christabel, will guide participants in a session focused on policy influence and advocacy, the gender lens in leadership and what it means to break the glass ceiling in leadership. This interactive session will provide participants with real-life case studies of women who have held leadership roles in politics and education.



Dawn Knight | Dawn is an interdisciplinary artist and educator and has served as a writer/consultant for Pembina Trails School Division, the Winnipeg Arts Council, Evergreen Centre for Green Studies, Manitoba Education, and Mentoring Artists for Women's Art. She is the president of the Manitoba Association for Art Education. Committed to feminism, anti-racism and decolonization, Knight is the co-author of *Resilience: Teacher Guide* (2017) and the *ArtAlive Art Education Resource* (2025). She was awarded the Canadian Society for Education Through Art Award for her contributions to art education in Manitoba (2018).

Have you ever walked into an art gallery and wondered: Where are all the women artists? Over 62% of graduates from fine arts programs are women, but women make up only 13% of living artists represented by galleries in Europe and North America. Why are almost all the most famous artists male? In this session, you will explore the ways that women artists and artists-of-colour influence, question and challenge social, political and cultural dialogue. How can advocating for diverse representation – in any field – open new conversations, grow our empathy and curiosity, and help us create spaces of curiosity, empathy and empowerment? Join art educator Dawn Knight for an hour of engagement with contemporary visual art and discover how the work of equity-seeking artists can inspire us to ask meaningful questions, unravel community histories, and better navigate our own complex, evolving identities. (No art-making skills required to enjoy this session!)



Kemlin Nembhard | Kemlin Nembhard has been a passionate supporter of Women's Health Clinic for many years. She was a member of the Board of Directors for two terms in the late 90's and early 00's.

In October 2021, Kemlin became WHC Executive Director, after filling the role of Interim Executive Director for over a year.

Kemlin is dedicated to equity, justice and building stronger communities. She's been involved with the Canadian Federation of Students, Daniel McIntyre St. Matthews Community Organization and The Canadian Women's Health Network, where she was the National Health Educator.

Kemlin has also served on the boards of community organizations such as SEED, the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Herizons Magazine, and West End Cultural Centre.

Kemlin uses her extensive experience as a community leader, organizer, facilitator and collaborator to guide WHC in its role as a unique, innovative and essential part of Manitoba's health care network. She and WHC always focus on putting the client first – hearing and trusting people's understanding of their own bodies and health and wellness needs.



Christabel Ofori | Christabel is a dedicated social worker with a deep passion for philanthropy and social justice. With the focus on supporting the most vulnerable populations, Christabel works to improve the lives of families she serves.

Christabel is also dedicated to advocating for women in all industry fields and she does that by being connected to organizations like Equal Voice and Black Girl Talk. Christabel will continue to advocate for equity and social change making a lasting impact on communities they serve.

Christabel, along with Tracy, will guide participants in a session focused on policy influence and advocacy, the gender lens in leadership and what it means to break the glass ceiling in leadership. This interactive session will provide participants with real-life case studies of women who have held leadership roles in politics and education.



Anna Rothney | Anna is the Executive Director of the Manitoba Federation of Labour, where she works to mobilize worker power for social and economic good. She previously worked as a senior advisor to several provincial governments, leading areas like policy, finance/budgeting and economic development. Anna is a left-wing economist by training, who believes that one of the most important reasons for studying economics is so as not to be fooled by economists. She's a passionate feminist, worker/human rights activist, and campaigner for social democratic movements. Anna believes that through organizing, inclusion and standing in solidarity, social justice is possible.



**WOMEN AND
LEADERSHIP**
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THE
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SOCIETY