



**2019 SICCC ē-micimināyakik Gathering:  
Museums, Cultural Centres, Archives, Interpretive Centres & Libraries  
Keynote Address  
Val Napoleon**

**Title:** Indigenous Intellectual Property: Arising Questions

**Biography:** Dr. Val Napoleon, Faculty of Law, University of Victoria: Indigenous People’s Counsel, Indigenous Bar Association; Law Foundation Chair of Aboriginal Justice and Governance; Director, JID/JD [Joint Indigenous and Common Law Degree Program] and the Indigenous Law Research Unit; and Provost’s Engaged Community Scholar. Dr. Napoleon’s current research focuses on Indigenous legal traditions, legal theories, feminisms, citizenship, self-determination, and governance. Several of her major initiatives include establishing and directing the Indigenous Law Research Unit, and developing and directing the JID (dual JD and indigenous law degree) program launched in September 2018. She work with numerous Indigenous community partners across Canada on a range of Indigenous law research projects (e.g., Indigenous water law, harms and injuries, gender in Indigenous law, and lands and resources) and also with several national and international Indigenous law research initiatives. Some of the courses she teaches are Indigenous feminist legal studies, Gitksan land law, property and transsystemic property, Indigenous legal theories, and Indigenous legal methodologies. She is from the Saulneau First Nation (BC Treaty 8) and am an adopted member of the House of Luuxhon, Ganada, from Gitanyow (northern Gitksan).

**Abstract:** As with other intellectual property, Indigenous intellectual property is a legal construct, an essential part of an Indigenous legal order and legal traditions. All societies, including Indigenous societies have organized ways of relating to the world, the things in the world, and to each other – some of this law may helpfully be comprehended through a “property lens”. Questions to be tackled are: How might we discern, understand, and apply and uphold lawfulness insofar as Indigenous intellectual property law? What are the issues and concerns with recording Indigenous legal narratives and law? This talk will set out one approach to Indigenous intellectual property and will identify a number of questions to generate much needed critical conversations in the future.

**Learning Outcomes:** Participants will be:

- Examining assumptions about Indigenous property law and creating space for new questions;
- Introducing one Indigenous legal methodology for engaging with Indigenous oral histories;
- Developing a theoretical framework for contextualizing Indigenous intellectual property; and,
- Identifying future legal research needs in the field of Indigenous intellectual property.