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## Writers' Foreword:

One hundred years ago women were fighting not just for the right to vote, but also for the right to be educated. At the turn of the 19th century, women enrolled in secondary and post-secondary institutions were the exception rather than the rule. Families that could afford to educate their daughters often chose to offer that instruction at home. Most women were funneled towards education in etiquette, needle work and music. Girls from lower classes were virtually excluded from any access to education.

Canadian women like Emily Stowe, were forced to leave the country to receive an education. Edith Monture, an Indigenous woman, was also refused entry into school in Canada. Under the Indian Act, Indigenous people did not have the right to attend post-secondary school in Canada.

Education played out like this; privileged boys attended school. They were educated by privileged men who decided what was important and as a result, created curricula and wrote textbooks about privileged white men.

Women were intentionally barred from higher education and on the rare occasion we were admitted, we weren't granted degrees or certification despite having done the same work our male peers completed. Once finally admitted to universities, we were still excluded from faculties of science, engineering and medicine. Acceptance into these programs was gradually achieved with great effort and initially rewarded with rampant sexism and relentless abuse.

Half of the population are women and yet our history books and curricula do not reflect this. History books are filled with accomplishments of men; because history was written by men and for men. If we do not address this and do not seek to know more about the stories, lives and accomplishments of women, we are missing half of the story.

If we want girls to grow up to be leaders, we must show them women leaders. If we want boys to grow up to understand and embrace equity, we must show them strong, competent, intelligent and successful Canadian women.

The content about women must be deliberate, purposeful and genuine. It cannot be tokenistic and taught only on International Women's Day or for the month of October during Canadian Women's History month. This knowledge must be woven throughout the curriculum.

This isn't something one teacher can change on their own. A shifting of who we look to as incredible Canadians requires strategic effort. But big-dreams like this become reality when the first step is taken. Our hope is that using this resource helps on the journey to more gender equity in what we teach.

In the spring of 2021, we were all reminded that the reconciliatory gap between settlers and First Nation, Métis and Inuit is vast; there is still much work to be done. With relations and reconciliation in mind, the writing team have purposefully included stories about Indigenous women in each of our sections. And the decision to create an entire section about First Nation, Metis and Inuit women was an intentional way to learn more about the contributions of First Nation, Metis and Inuit women. We have also chosen to

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use storytelling as a method in creating this document; by creating a resource that has mini biographies about the lives of incredible women. We recognize that storytelling is a powerful way of transmitting knowledge and is a methodology that many Indigenous communities have been using for thousands of years.

As a writing team, we recognize that being non-Indigenous, settler educators, inherently positions us with a certain lens. However, we have approached this work with The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action in mind; with the intention to not only include information about First Nation, Metis and Inuit women, but to do the work in a good way. In part, this has been done through reviewing the Calls the TRC makes to educators, in particular, the Call to Action number 63, which calls on education leaders to work on improving education about Indigenous people and cultures. In this resource, we have ensured that the lives of many Indigenous women have been included. We have also sought out information and resources written by Indigenous scholars, researchers, biographers and storytellers.