

**New Directions in Aboriginal Policy
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<http://blogs.mtroyal.ca/fwiddowson/new-directions-forums/>

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BIO

Mark is a former UN peacekeeper whose parents suffered under Nazi occupation in Holland. He left his real estate brokerage career in 2006 to become a full time activist in Caledonia confronting what he believed to be a grave danger to the rule of law posed by racially-biased policing practices of the Ontario Provincial Police in response to aboriginal extremism.

Mark was one of the original founders of Canadian Advocates for Charter Equality along with Gary McHale, and co-authored several key CANACE reports. He was the leader of the Ipperwash Papers project which was released at a news conference in the Media Studio of the Ontario Legislature on March 14, 2007, and has written more than 340 articles for his blog VoiceofCanada.ca which is the only resource specifically recommended on the Yahoo! Canada News 'In-Depth - First Nations' feature page for coverage of the Caledonia crises. His work has been used or cited by politicians, respected academics, and by media which include the CBC National News; the Globe & Mail; Western Standard; the Ryerson Review of Journalism; and the Caledonia-based Regional News.

After three and a half years of Caledonia activism Mark left CANACE in February 2010 to found the independent Caledonia Victims Project to focus on providing policy makers and influencers with the resources necessary to facilitate healing and reconciliation through truth, justice and respect for the rule of law.

Mark has consistently spoken out on behalf of aboriginal victims as well as non-aboriginal.

OUTLINE

Listening to Victims: A Fresh Approach to Reconciliation & Healing

The 2010 '*New Directions in Aboriginal Policy*' forum is the first time victims of 'aboriginal sovereignty' protesters in Caledonia and Ipperwash will have a voice at the policy discussion table. The importance of this is underscored by disastrously-flawed policy-making caused by the callous lack of concern and inclusion afforded non-aboriginal victims by government, police, NGOs and sovereignty proponents. This 'disconnect' makes the goal of reconciliation a practical impossibility.

Aboriginals, too, have been victims of policing policies that allow illegal occupation sites to become lawless 'home-free zones' for rape, assault, arson, drug use and gun violence. One might also argue that the use of children to assist in the violent takeover of Camp Ipperwash was a form of child abuse.

Although the Ontario government ostensibly defends its handling of the Caledonia crisis on the premise it is following recommendations of the Ipperwash Inquiry, it knows full well the Inquiry *never studied* the issue of aboriginal violence against innocent residents, or the effects of racial policing in escalating violence even though, according to the town's CAO, the events at Ipperwash - including the demise of Dudley George - were caused by unequal law enforcement in the years *prior* to Mr. George's death. The deliberate misapplication of intellectually-dishonest recommendations represents a tragic and dangerous policy fraud with far-reaching consequences.

The path to healing and reconciliation, or even sovereignty itself, requires a far more mature and intellectually honest approach than has been seen to-date in aboriginal policy development. The urgency and importance of rigorous research that is inclusive of victims cannot be overstated.