



## Government of Yukon

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**NEWS**release

FOR RELEASE #10-044  
March 23, 2010

### A social inclusion symposium to discuss reduction of poverty

WHITEHORSE – Senator Hugh Segal will be one of the keynote speakers at an April 9 symposium where interested Yukoners will gather to discuss reduction of poverty and social inclusion in Yukon.

The symposium is the first of two, planned by the Office of Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, which was established by Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart last October. It follows a day of workshops in which frontline government and non-government workers who help Yukoners, join members of the public to discuss how to improve access to government services, and break down the barriers preventing some Yukoners from fully participating in Yukon society.

"Health and Social Services was tasked with leading the work on the strategy," Hart said.

"Working with our governmental and non-governmental colleagues, we will develop a carefully thought-out plan that will guide us for years to come, a plan that will result in a better Yukon for all Yukoners."

The theme of the symposium, to be held at the Gold Rush Inn, is "Bridges and Barriers." It will feature panel discussions and speeches by special guests including Segal, B.C. Provincial Court Judge Marion Buller Bennett, and Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Andy Nieman.

The symposium is one tool the Office of Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction will use in reaching its goal of creating a Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy by March 31, 2011. A follow-up symposium is slated for fall 2010.

For more information on the Yukon Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy, including the symposium, visit [www.abetteryukon.com](http://www.abetteryukon.com).

See backgrounder attached.

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### Biographies

**Judge Marion Buller Bennett**

Judge Buller Bennett is a member of the Mistawasis First Nation in Saskatchewan. She graduated from the University of Victoria with a B.A. and Bachelor's Degree in Law. Judge Buller Bennett was called to the B.C. bar in 1988.

As a lawyer, Judge Buller Bennett practiced criminal and civil law. She was commission counsel for the Cariboo Chilcotin Justice Inquiry and wrote her own report on Legal Services for Aboriginal People in B.C. Judge Buller Bennett was a member of the B.C. Police Commission and the Law Court Education Society. Judge Buller Bennett has been director and president of the Indigenous Bar Association in Canada. She has published numerous articles about Aboriginal rights.

Judge Buller Bennett is the only First Nations female judge in B.C. She has been a provincial court judge for over fifteen years. She presides in all courts and is based in Port Coquitlam.

For the past three years, Judge Buller Bennett has held First Nations court in New Westminster. The court takes a holistic approach to sentencing and related family court matters.

**Andy Nieman**

Andy Nieman was born and raised in Whitehorse. At 16, he dropped out of the school system. Twenty-two years later, he returned to further his education and graduated from the University of Regina with a Bachelor of Social Work degree in June of 2000.

Nieman began his social work career as a healing therapist at Kwanlin Dun's Community Wellness Program and then worked for Government of Yukon's Child Abuse Treatment Services as an outreach worker. In that capacity, he travelled to Yukon communities and administered therapeutic healing services to children who had experienced neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Three years later, Nieman left to open his private practice, Beautiful Journey Counseling Services. As a private practitioner, he specialized in treating trauma-based abuse with a major focus on healing families and communities impacted by Residential School Syndrome. His private work took him to every Yukon community and various communities in northern British Columbia.

He came through foster care, group homes, residential school, alcohol and drug addiction and has been clean and sober for 16 years. He is an ordained minister.

Nieman became the Yukon's Child and Youth Advocate in 2009.

**Senator Hugh Segal**

Senator Hugh Segal was appointed by Prime Minister Paul Martin in 2005. Prior to that time, Hugh Segal had served as president of the Institute for Research on Public Policy, and was a former associate cabinet secretary in Ontario and chief of staff to the prime minister of Canada. A graduate in history from the University of Ottawa, Hugh Segal is a senior fellow at the Queen's School of Policy Studies where he has lectured in the MPA program since 1993. In the Senate he is a former chair of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade committee, and a former vice-chair of the Subcommittee on Cities which published a recent report on poverty, homelessness and inclusion entitled *In from the Margins*. Senator Segal was also a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture that published a report on rural poverty in 2008 entitled *Beyond Freefall*.

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