

Nancy Howe Lutz

I was born in 1935, one of 11 children of Ernest John Howe and Bridget Maloney Howe. Born in Micmac, Nova Scotia, the community currently known as Indian Brook and traditional name, Sipekne'katik. My maternal grandparents were the late Nancy and Thomas Maloney and my paternal grandparents were the late Joseph (Jeremy) Howe and Elizabeth (Cope) Howe. My family were the founding members of our reservation. My father was moved from their homestead near the Shubenacadie River in Elmsdale during the time when centralization took place. This brought many others to our community from other Mi'kmaw communities across Nova Scotia. I grew up with my siblings, Marie, Rita, Thomas, Victoria, Gordon, Freddie, Leo, Joseph, Lawrence, and Jeanette.

My first teacher was Elsie Charles (Basque) who came to teach us at the Day School in the 1940s, where church pews were used for desks and seats. She taught us in a positive way and we were learning without fear of abuse and where I began to love school. We loved our teacher and she loved us! We visited her and had a reunion with all her students to celebrate with her and share our stories.

I am a survivor of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School, my siblings and I were apprehended and taken there in 1944, where we spent 5 years. I have memories of experiencing childhood trauma and witnessing the abuse of my siblings and others that brings such sadness to recall and choose not to go into details. I want to remember and honour the courage and resiliency of all the children who survived the residential school in Shubenacadie. The impacts of the IRS left me and my siblings disconnected from our parents and extended family and friends. Every summer, when we returned home there were more people moving into our community that we didn't know. We felt left out and alienated, not being able to communicate and interact as family and friends. When we were released from the IRS and returned home, we had to attend the Day School on the reserve, and our teacher Elsie Charles was gone. The Sisters of Charity ran the Indian Day School on the reserve, so we were mistreated the same way as we were in Indian Residential School. Our IRS and Day School education did not provide the basic foundations of reading and writing and learning and I had completed a grade 6 education.

I was married at the age of 17, arranged by my parents, to John A. Bernard, also an IRS survivor and a World War II Veteran, who was a friend of my Dad's. We had five children. I joined my husband in Boston in 1958, where he was working. The traumatic impacts of residential school and the war resulted in his lifelong battle with alcoholism and the domestic violence on our family, which finally ended in divorce in 1968. I continued to raise my family as a single parent, working and supporting my children.

I met the love of my life, my husband, Thomas Lutz, and we have been together for 49 years. We have 2 children and he accepted my 5 children as his own. We moved our family to Baltimore, Maryland where we raised our children together. Tom is a US Veteran and worked in the US Postal Service Security for 40 years until his retirement. We share our home with our pet German Shepherd, Max and enjoy our lives together, doing activities of cycling, walking, and traveling and family get-togethers.

I always instilled the values of helping family, the importance of education and working hard for what you want in life, to my children. After raising my children and they were pursuing their university education and succeeding in their chosen fields, I returned to school at the community college as an adult learner, to upgrade my education. I graduated with an Early Childhood Educator Degree, which I was very proud of. I also took courses in Dental Assistant and Radiology to work with my daughter, in her dental practice. I'm very proud of my children's and grandchildren's accomplishments, and they are

proud of mine too. They are all successful professionals and are doing well. Dr. Joanne Bernard and Dr. Thomas Lutz, Jr. are Dental Surgeons, Dr. Tammy Lutz is a Pharmacist and Karen Byard is a Dental Administrator, Linda Bernard is a Dental Assistant and Dorene Bernard, has a Master of Social Work. My grandchildren are doing well and I want the best education and opportunities for my grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

I want our young people to know that they are responsible for their well being and happiness. You can do anything in life. When you become parents, you will have the responsibility to raise your children in a good way. Take care of your children and they will take care of your grandchildren and in this way, you will help to break the chain of poverty and trauma of the IRS and create a better future.