


Panelists



Commissioner Raymond Th  berge **Lamare Robinson** **Andrew McArthur**

Ask Me Anything

A Courageous Conversation on
What It Means to be Bilingual in the Public Service

Time: 1:00 pm EST **Date:** September 14, 2022 **Hosts:** Mary Ann Dewey-Plante and Bernadeth Betchi

Ask Me Anything: Bilingualism

What it Means to be Bilingual in the Public Service

Featuring: Commissioner Raymond Th  berge, Lamare Robinson, and Andrew McArthur

Opening Remarks by: Dave Morton

Co-hosted by: Mary Ann Dewey-Plante and Bernadeth Betchi

Date and time: Wednesday, September 14 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM EST

Audience: Open to all Government of Canada employees

Register: [Online registration form](#)

Link to join: [Join the webinar](#)

Ask Me Anything is now on GC Wiki Collab <https://wiki.gccollab.ca/AMA>.

Event description

In July 1867, English and French were officially permitted in the Parliament of Canada (<https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/timeline/1860-1869>). Since then, there has been a multitude of millstones that celebrated and integrated both official languages into Canadian culture and history.

Promotion and support for bilingualism include access to education in both languages, youth learning opportunities, career learning opportunities and a strengthened network. Bilingualism is a key component of Diversity and Inclusion that falls under belonging. Communication is a basis of human nature, and being able to communicate with each other creates spaces for cooperation, understanding, and inclusion.

Join us this month as the Ask Me Anything stage welcomes speakers to talk about their experiences and thoughts on bilingualism, its importance in our work environments, and its impact on our lives.

About the Ask Me Anything Series

This session is part of a series of Ask Me Anything sessions that give us a platform to share stories, listen, ask respectful questions and continue on our journey to becoming more inclusive organizations.

As individuals, you can't necessarily change where you live. You certainly can't change your past, but you can adjust who influences you—through the authors you read, the music you listen to, movies you watch and interactions with your community. The *Ask Me Anything* series provides you with an opportunity to increase your perspective—to learn from the lived experiences of individuals who are bravely sharing their stories to help educate and move the public service towards a culture where equity is embedded.

The series also provides an opportunity for you to know that you aren't alone. These experiences, especially the negative ones, are systemic and happen all too frequently throughout the public service. The objective by shining this light is to continually increase the network of public servants ready to take action and move forward towards a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Opening Remarks by Dave Morton, Parks Canada



Dave Morton has worked at the Parks Canada Agency since 2005 as an administrative assistant providing clerical and administrative/operational support services and related information and guidance, in support of the National Internal Communications Team as well as the Leadership and Learning Team. Before joining the communication team, Dave performed as a member of the PeopleSoft Team, working on the National Classification Review under Human Resources Management System (HRMS) and the employee data update project.

Outside of PCA, Dave is an ASL (American Sign Language) instructor at Carleton University and Algonquin College teaching undergraduate students about Deaf Culture and understanding the structure of sign language. ASL is not the only language Dave can sign, he can also sign Langue des signes québécoise and few other manual languages.

Personally, Dave enjoys outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, downhill skiing and mountain biking, and is also a competitive curling player through cash spiels (curling tournaments). Dave holds medals from the World Deaf Curling Championships in Sochi, Russia in 2017 and Winter Deaflympics in Khanty-Mansiysk, Russia in 2015. Dave was born in CFB Lahr, West Germany until nearly a year-old, then immigrated to Canada while his father was stationed in the military. Dave has an ancestry of Mi'kmaq from Nova Scotia.

Dave's top accomplishment in education comes with a degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1999 from Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York and he's gone through deaf education at Sir James Whitney School in Belleville, Ontario.

"Disability is not considered to deaf community as we don't have any physical disability except hear."

Meet Our Amazing Panelists



Raymond Th  berge, Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

Raymond Th  berge took office as Commissioner of Official Languages on January 29, 2018.

Raymond Th  berge has a Ph.D. in linguistics from McGill University, a master's degree in applied linguistics from the University of Ottawa and a bachelor's degree in history from the Coll  ge universitaire de Saint-Boniface. He held a number of leadership positions before coming to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and he has significant experience with official language minority communities. He also has extensive experience in academia and has worked across Canada.

He spent a large part of his career at the Coll  ge universitaire de Saint-Boniface (1985–1995 and 1997–2003), where he was director of the research centre, a professor in the faculty of education and then dean of education. In 2012, he was appointed president and vice-chancellor of the Universit   de Moncton.

Raymond Th  berge's background also includes experience as a senior public servant. From 2004 to 2005, he was assistant deputy minister at the Bureau de l'  ducation fran  aise in Manitoba's Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth. From there, he moved to the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, where he was executive director from 2005 to 2009. He was also an assistant deputy minister in Ontario's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

He is the author of numerous peer-reviewed publications, three books and a bibliography, and has completed many research projects, which reflect his interest in official language minority communities. He wrote a book called *Demain, la francophonie en milieu minoritaire?* about the future of French-speaking minority communities and an article entitled “Le développement culturel des communautés francophones de l’Ouest : Vers un plan d’action” about the cultural development of French-speaking communities in Western Canada.

Raymond Théberge has served on boards of directors of a number of organizations, including the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne and the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie. He was Director General of the Société franco manitobaine from 1983 to 1985, and president of the Centre d’études franco canadiennes de l’Ouest from 1995 to 2004.



**Lamare Robinson, Acting Senior Analyst,
Strategic Planning Culture Change
Evolution, DG Culture Change (DGCC), Chief
Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC),
National Defence**

Lamare has been a public servant for over ten years, serving in various roles across Parks Canada and, currently, in National Defence. She has had the great privilege to work in and visit most regions of Nunavut, and her love of the territory – the people, the culture, the languages, and the land – endures. She is a storyteller, first and always. She is a lifelong student, a survivor, and an optimist. She is working to co-create meaningful and lasting change in our workplaces and in our communities, where we all feel – and *are* – safe to be our authentic selves and where

inclusion, diversity, equity, and true belonging are expected and assured. Her vision: One day, people will look back on this time and think us silly and tragic. They’ll say, *Of course, diversity is our strength. Of course, we belong here.*



Andrew McArthur, Senior Analyst, Risk Management, Department of Justice Canada

Andrew McArthur is a Senior Analyst for the Department of Justice Canada working in the area of Risk Management. He has spent the past 10+ years in the federal government the majority of that time working in various capacities with the Canadian Human Rights Commission including as Manager of the Results and Performance Unit and the Complaint Intake Unit.

Andrew grew up in a unilingual English environment in Southern Ontario where his only exposure to French was in school until grade 9. After graduating from McMaster University, Andrew moved to Québec City to learn French in an immersive environment. That experience though extremely difficult was an incredibly enriching one which has been a benefit in both professional and personal pursuits.

Meet Our Co-Hosts



Mary Ann Dewey-Plante, Assistant Director, External Relations and Industry Engagement, Canadian Coast Guard

Mary Ann Dewey-Plante joined the Canadian Coast Guard as Manager of International Engagement in August 2021. Since March 2022, she has held the position of Acting Director, External Relations and Industry Engagement. Mary Ann holds her LL.B. from l'Université de Sherbrooke and a certificate in Women's Studies (With Distinction) from Bishop's University.

Mary Ann has devoted a quarter of a century to public service, including running for office. After a time in the private sector, she held senior positions in a variety of offices of Ministers of the Crown from 2008-2015, notably at the Department of Finance and the Department of Justice, leading communications strategies and policy development of important government initiatives.

Mary Ann entered the Federal Civil Service in 2016, when she joined the Canada Revenue Agency, (CRA) where as Assistant Director, Issues and Strategic Communications, she

led the Agency's communications strategy on Offshore Tax Evasion as well as Domestic Compliance.

In 2019, Mary Ann took a sabbatical from the civil service to serve at Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, (AECL) leading the organization's communications and stakeholder relations strategies and efforts in support of various initiatives including the development of Small Modular Reactors. In her role, she also helped lead the building and nurturing of relationships with Indigenous communities, to further Reconciliation.

Most recently, prior to joining the Canadian Coast Guard, Mary Ann led the implementation of the Government of Canada's COVID financial support programs at the CRA, leading the program that delivered over \$100 billion in support to assist Canadian businesses weather the economic impacts of the COVID -19 pandemic. In recognition of these efforts Mary Ann and her team were awarded a CRA Award of Excellence for Partnerships from the Commissioner of the CRA.



Bernadeth Betchi, Acting Section Head, Lead Advisor for Diversity and Inclusion, Materiel Group, National Defence

Bernadeth has a Bachelor of Communication, a Masters of Women and Gender Studies and is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa.

She has worked at the Prime Minister of Canada's office, at the Canadian Human Rights Commission and as a professor of Communications and Human Rights at Algonquin College.

As a Black woman living in Canada, she is constantly reminded that she could be an outsider. Having always been intrigued by the experiences of other marginalized groups, Bernadeth has always been drawn towards their narratives, recognizing that their similarities and differences brought them together as they strive to construct or deconstruct their cultural identity.

Bernadeth is the mother of three humans. She is also a sister, a daughter, an aunt, and a friend.

Mission - Ask Me Anything Series

We recognize that individuals are composed of a multitude of layers that make us who we are. We do not fit easily in one box or another and we can't be neatly counted. We represent the mosaic of Canada.

It is important that we find value in each other's experiences, differences and unique characteristics. When we build our cultural competencies, we are able to work better together in our teams and respond to each other with relevance, empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain greater appreciation of each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

We know through diversity, workplaces and communities are stronger, more successful and resilient. And most important, it creates spaces of inclusion and fosters a workplace of belonging where people feel valued.

[#AMACHallenge](#)

We encourage others to have courageous conversations with their peers. Use the monthly Ask Me Anything sessions as an opportunity to have brave conversations in your workplaces with your teams.

Here's what you need to do:

- Invite your leaders and colleagues in your organization to an Ask Me Anything watch party, tune in live and watch the session together. Make sure it's in their calendars.
- Before the watch party, book an "After the AMA – Team Session" with your immediate team for the day after the event for 30-60 minutes. Share the resource guide and have these questions for discussion.

After the AMA – Team Session Discussion Questions

1. What was my main takeaway – expand and share an amazing quote, story or moment
2. What made me uncomfortable/ what was one of my blind spots?
3. What is an example of systemic discrimination that I am aware of in my life?
4. What am I not going to do anymore?
5. How can I use my voice/ influence? – both overtly/covertly
6. Where am I going to dig in and learn more?
7. How will I continue this conversation?

It is important that we find value in the experiences, the unique characteristics of each other. When we develop our cultural competence, we are able to work better together within our teams and respond to each other with relevant empathy and compassion. By celebrating and sharing our authentic selves, we gain a greater appreciation for each other and the diversity that surrounds us.

Thank you to our contributors

Thank you to our contributors from across the Public Service of Canada – Canadian Coast Guard, National Defence, Health Canada, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Justice Canada and Parks Canada.

MCs: Mary Ann Dewey-Plante and Bernadeth Betchi

Panelists: Dave Morton, Raymond Théberge, Lamare Robinson and Andrew McArthur

AMA Team: Tara Lockhart, Terri-Ann Hurst, Natasha Lim, Jasmine Cousineau, Shelby Racine, Danielle MacKinlay, Michel Mainville, Melissa Michaud, Lamare Robinson, Bernadeth Betchi, Liliya Ishkaeva, Terri Graham, Kelly Brewer-Balch, Lyrique Richards, Wanda Lewis