



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Chairperson appointed to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission's Board of Commissioners

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission welcomes Laurie Bonten as the Chairperson of its Board of Commissioners. Bonten has been appointed to the role by Order in Council for a three year term starting in December 2021.

Bonten, a Founder and Senior Investment Advisor of Enhanced Wealth Management, at Wellington-Altus Private Wealth has been committed to increasing the representation of women in the financial investment sector. "I began my career at a time when being a woman and a financial advisor was almost unheard of," said Bonten. "I am proud of the advances women have made in financial sector and proud to advocate for further inroads in gender equality in my field."

Bonten has also been a strong community advocate, serving most recently as Co-Chair of the David Foster Foundation Miracle Gala & Concert hosted in Winnipeg. Bonten has also volunteered with the United Way Major Donors Winnipeg and Manitoba Special Olympics.

Bonten takes on her role at a pivotal time for the Commission, with amendments to *The Human Rights Code* taking effect on January 1, 2022. Bonten will help oversee the implementation of these crucial changes, which aim to make the human rights complaint system more timely and efficient. "We need to ensure that our complaints system can deliver results for Manitobans more quickly. People who feel they have been impacted by discrimination deserve a response to their concerns without delay," said Bonten.

Bonten will also lead the organization through the renewal of its strategic plan. "I look forward to working with my fellow Commissioners, Commission staff and our community stakeholders to define the next five years of the Commission's work," said Bonten. "Our agency plays a pivotal role in protecting and promoting human rights in Manitoba. As we look toward the future, I am excited to hear diverse perspectives on how we can build upon our past successes and improve the effectiveness and meaningfulness of the work of the Commission."

Laurie Bonten replaces former Chairperson Brenlee Carrington Trepel, who stepped down from the role in April 2020. Since that time, the Commission's Vice-Chairperson, John Burchill, has been Acting Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners.

In addition to Laurie Bonten, Aaron Penner was also appointed to the Board of Commissioners, replacing Loretta Ross who served on the Commission since 2013.

Currently, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission's Board of Commissioners consists of Laurie Bonten, John Burchill, Ian Grant, Jeanette Acheson, Tracey Leipsic, Michael Reader, Darcy Strutinsky and Aaron Penner.

For media enquiries, including interviews with Laurie Bonten, please contact the Commission's A/Executive Director Karen Sharma at Karen.Sharma@gov.mb.ca or (204) 792-2172.