

# 2024 Pounamu Taonga Award Recipient



**Gerald Bent**

In 2007, Gerald graduated from Simon Fraser University (SFU) with a B.A. in Anthropology and a B.Ed. as a second degree. Since 2008, Gerald Bent has worked at the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), working with the Indigenous, Metis, and Two-Spirit inmates who are currently incarcerated or on a conditional release to the community. Gerald has held many roles at the CSC and is currently on assignment working at the Pacific Regional Headquarters (RHQ) office as Project Officer in Indigenous Initiatives. As Project Officer, Gerald supervises seven Indigenous Liaison Officer (ILO's). Gerald also works on a variety of project management endeavours and opportunities that contribute to the development and delivery of a range of Indigenous supports and programs that are geared towards assisting Indigenous offenders who are on a healing journey/path to reintegration to the community or to their traditional territory.

In 2011, Gerald reapplied to Simon Fraser University to study Criminology and Indigenous studies. In 2017, Gerald completed his Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Criminology, and a Certificate in Correctional Studies. For his post-graduate program, Gerald focussed on researching and writing about Indigenous Corrections and Interventions, Elders working inside correctional facilities, and over the course of his studies, he developed a keen interest in studying the theory of Restorative Justice (RJ).

On November 15-2023, Gerald Bent defended his MA in First Nations Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). After deliberation by the thesis examination committee, Gerald was granted a 'clear pass,' for his thesis entitled, "Nlaka'pamux Justice Systems: An Investigation of Xitl'ix and the Lytton Restorative Justice Prevention and Education Program." For Gerald's thesis, he focussed on Indigenous healing, Nlaka'pamux Justice Systems, and Restorative Justice (RJ) paradigms. On May 30-2024, Gerald attended UNBC's Indigenous graduation ceremony where his Sr. Supervisor-Dr. Theresa Healy, presented him with his MA parchment in First Nations Studies. Gerald is currently working at the CSC and is also sessional instructor at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) working in the departments of Criminology and Indigenous Studies. Gerald will continue to work at the CSC and at KPU, but is also considering pursuing a PhD degree building on his research on Nlaka'pamux Justice Systems, or of Nlaka'pamux Knowledge Systems.