



*Sault Ste. Marie
Municipal Heritage Committee*

Municipal Heritage Committee 2024 Heritage Award

Dean Sayers served as Chief of Batchewana First Nation for nearly two decades and is from the Crane Clan, specifically linked to the blue heron in the central Great Lakes region. His journey as a leader has been driven by an unwavering commitment to the progress and well-being of the original Peoples of these lands.

Throughout his tenure, Dean has dedicated his life to advancing the interests of Indigenous communities and fiercely advocating for their rights. He firmly believes that the creation of the Assembly of First Nations marked a significant milestone, established to be a voice and advocate for the collective interests of Indigenous peoples.

Dean's remarkable career includes serving as one of the lead negotiators for the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 annuities litigation, which resulted in a groundbreaking \$10 billion settlement. He was also a strong advocate during the Ontario First Nations' fight against the proposed HST tax. Dean has consistently participated in regional leadership spaces such as the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), where he has contributed his experience and insights to the broader Indigenous community.

Dean has made significant contributions to heritage through his involvement in developing and creating the 'Voices from the Gathering Place' project, a rich historical resource about Sault Ste. Marie includes video resources of Anishinaabe elders and knowledge-keepers sharing history and culture through oral tradition. In addition, this project also contains songs and videos to tell the story of the early history of Canada through the eyes and experiences of individuals from Sault Ste. Marie for the benefit of students and youth.

Dean's contributions have also led to a permanent installation that is part of Parks Canada's Visitor Centre at the Sault Ste. Marie Canal National Historic Site, which details significant oral history and the impacts on Batchewana First Nation as well as the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Metis People.