



## WILLA BLACK

### CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

A focused champion for women and girls, Willa Black is a leader and activator.

Over her extensive career, Willa has advocated for women and girls building programs to ensure equity of opportunity through digital access to education and mental health resources, and IT skills training.

As Vice-President of Corporate Affairs for Cisco Canada, Willa is a driving force for change. She understands the role business can, and must, play to address some of Canada's most urgent social issues. In 2011, she launched the Connected North Network, using technology to connect students in Canada's north to opportunities not available to them locally — Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programming, Indigenous mentors, virtual field trips, mental wellness resources and more. In 2016 Connected North was migrated from Cisco to charity partner

TakingITGlobal and today reaches 130 schools and 25,000 students across Canada's north. Willa has built an ecosystem of private and public sector partners to scale this network of possibility — bringing the world into northern classrooms. She remains its core champion with a goal to connect more schools and students in Indigenous communities to the opportunities they deserve.

Willa and her team also lead the charge with Girls in STEM programming, building partnerships with Girls Who Code, and managing nationwide hackathons. In 2021, she launched CyberNB with the Government of New Brunswick to provide Cisco cyber security training in high schools' province-wide.

As Chair of the Connected North Advisory Board and within Cisco Canada, she continues to activate change in Indigenous communities and advocate for women and girls in STEM.

Among her list of numerous awards, in 2018 Willa was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal by the Governor General for outstanding service to Canada and received the Women in Communications and Technology: Leadership Excellence Innovator Award.

Through Willa's fierce and determined leadership, she remains deeply committed to unlocking the potential in women, girls and Indigenous students through making access to technology more equitable.



[WWW.WOMENOFDISTINCTION.CA](http://WWW.WOMENOFDISTINCTION.CA) | #YWCAWOD