Colette Bourgonje

Colette Bourgonje is a 10-time Paralympic athlete and a former teacher with Saskatoon Public Schools. Bourgonje, who is Métis, won 10 Paralympic medals during her competitive career. She won six medals in Para-Nordic skiing, including a silver and bronze at the 2010 Vancouver Paralympics when she was the first Canadian to win a Paralympic medal on home soil. Bourgonje competed as a wheelchair racer during three Summer Paralympics, winning two bronze medals at both the 1992 Barcelona Paralympics and the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics.

In the spring of 1980, Bourgonje was 18 and ready to graduate from Grade 12 when she was injured in a vehicle accident near her hometown of Porcupine Plain. That fall, she became the first physically disabled student to enroll in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Physical Education. Four years later, she was the first disabled student to graduate from the college and the first female student in a wheelchair to graduate from a physical education program at any Canadian university. She followed up with a Bachelor of Education degree from the U of S.

From 1989 to 2010, Bourgonje worked for Saskatoon Public Schools as an elementary physical education and classroom teacher on a half-time basis, while continuing her training and competition schedule. Bourgonje worked at Silverwood Heights, Prince Philip, Brunskill, Lakeview and Fairhaven schools before turning her attention to training full-time.

Bourgonje was inducted into the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame in 2010. She lives and substitute teaches part-time in the Prince Albert area. She coaches cross-country skiing to physically challenged individuals and is an advocate for being active and pursuing sport.