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Nov. 22, 1989
080-1989

Alcohol abuse topic of conference to be held at Laurier

Alcohol abuse will be the focus of a day-long conference at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo on Friday, Dec. 1.

Called Alcohol, Individuals and Society, the conference will feature three speakers on ethical, policy and gender issues related to alcohol abuse.

Ken Black, Ontario minister of tourism and recreation and the cabinet member responsible for the government's anti-drug strategy, will also address the conference. Recently, he unveiled details of the government's \$37-million plan to reduce illegal drug use.

Lawrence Haworth, a professor of philosophy at the University of Waterloo, will explore how alcoholism results in a loss of personal autonomy.

Colleen Lundy, a professor of social work at Carleton University in Ottawa, will speak on "Women and Alcohol: Moving Beyond Disease Theory."

She says the roots of drug and alcohol abuse by women are found in the economic, political and social conditions they face;

even treatment programs are geared towards men. Lundy will suggest strategies to tailor such programs for women.

Robert Solomon, a professor of law at the University of Western Ontario in London, will speak on the need for a national consensus on drug policy, which is legislated at both the federal and provincial level.

He says our preoccupation with illicit drugs and the criminal justice system has drawn public attention away from the larger drug problems, namely alcohol and tobacco use.

The conference, to be held in the Paul Martin Centre on campus, will begin at 8:30 a.m. Black will speak from 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., followed by Haworth from 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 p.m. Lundy will make her presentation from 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. and Solomon will speak from 2 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Those attending the conference will include academics, school health teachers, counsellors and other practitioners.