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## Laurier to award four honorary degrees at spring convocation

WATERLOO – A distinguished pianist, an accomplished businessman, an award-winning novelist and a respected advocate for the rights of imprisoned women will each receive an honorary degree at Wilfrid Laurier University's spring convocation in June.

The university will also bestow one Order of Wilfrid Laurier University award for exemplary service to the university, and one Distinguished Governor Award to recognize a retiring or retired member of Laurier's Board of Governors who has given outstanding service to the university.

Five convocation ceremonies will be held at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex from June 5-7, and three ceremonies will be held at the university's Brantford campus on June 18 and 19.

Honorary degree recipients:

**Janina Fialkowska** is a classical pianist who has performed with prestigious orchestras around the world for more than 30 years. She has premiered several important works, including the world premiere performance of a newly discovered piano concerto by Franz Liszt with the Chicago Symphony in 1990. She is also the founding director of the successful Piano Six project and its successor Piano Plus, which brings together some of Canada's greatest pianists, instrumentalists and vocalists to play for audiences in rural and remote communities across the country. After a career-threatening diagnosis of cancer in her left arm and a rare muscle-transfer procedure in 2003, Fialkowska resumed her career performing only with her right hand for 18 months before a triumphant return to two-handed performing. A member of the Order of Canada, Fialkowska has also received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement in Classical Music. She will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree Wednesday, June 5 at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex starting at 2 p.m.

**John Thompson** is the former chairman of the board of TD Bank Financial Group. Thompson graduated from Western University with a degree in Engineering Science and began his career with IBM as a systems engineer. He held a variety of management roles before being appointed chief executive officer of IBM Canada in 1986, and went on to run IBM's worldwide computer hardware business and software operations before being appointed vice-chair of the board. Thompson is also a director at Thomson Reuters Corporation and the Atlantic Salmon Federation Canada, as well as a member of the board of Philips Electronics N.V. and a member of the Board of Trustees for the Hospital for Sick Children. He recently completed a four-year term as chancellor of Western University. He will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree on Friday, June 7 at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex starting at 9:30 a.m.

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**Eric Walters** is an award-winning young-adult novelist and philanthropist. With a background in social work and teaching, he has published 70 novels for young adults and has won more than 100 awards, including the Ontario Library Association Silver Birch and Red Maple Awards. Walter's books resonate with young people by dealing with complex issues, social justice and the power of positive change, with subjects including racial tensions in schools, bullying, and 9/11, all from a Canadian perspective. An advocate for national literacy and social engagement, Walters initiated National School Run Day encouraging all schools across the country to hold a Terry Fox Run. With his wife, he also founded The Creation of Hope, which provides shelter, food and other support to orphan children in Kenya. Walters will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree Tuesday, June 18 at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts in Brantford starting at 2:30 p.m.

**Kim Pate** is a lawyer and executive director of the Canadian Elizabeth Fry Society for the past 21 years. An internationally acclaimed advocate for the rights of criminalized and imprisoned women, Pate is a frequent participant in parliamentary committees in Ottawa providing input into the gendered impact of federal correctional policies, and she reports to the United Nations regarding Canada's adherence to international standards, treaties and covenants in the area of criminal justice. Pate currently holds the Shirley Greenberg Human Rights Chair at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law, where she teaches courses in prison law and the rights of battered women. In 2011 she received the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case and the same year accepted the Correctional Investigator Human Rights Award. She will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree Wednesday, June 19 at the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts in Brantford starting at 2:30 p.m.

### **Order of Wilfrid Laurier University recipient:**

**Mary D'Alton**, a former vice-chair of Laurier's Board of Governors and recipient of Laurier's 2008 Honorary Alumna Award, will receive her award June 6 at the 9:30 a.m. ceremony at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex.

### **Distinguished Governor Award recipient:**

**John Ormston**, a former chair of Laurier's Board of Governors and long-serving member of the board, will receive his award June 6 at the 2 p.m. ceremony at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex.