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Wilfrid Laurier University announces honorary degree recipients

WATERLOO – **William Downe**, CEO of BMO Financial Group, **Astrid Janson**, award-winning production and costume designer, **Lillian Allen**, a pioneer of dub poetry, and **Peter Wilkinson Howitt**, a renowned economist, will receive honorary degrees at Wilfrid Laurier University's spring convocation in June.

Three convocation ceremonies will be held at Laurier's **Brantford** campus on **June 7 and 8**, and 10 ceremonies will be held on the university's **Waterloo** campus from **June 13 to 17**.

Astrid Janson is an award-winning scenographer, production and costume designer. In 1973, she began designing costumes for Toronto Dance Theatre, Global Village and Theatre Compact. Janson has accumulated over 150 professional productions both at home and abroad. Her professional design work includes the exhibition in the Ontario Pavilion for Expo '86 in Vancouver and a new Discover Gallery for the Royal Ontario Museum. Her set and costume designs have graced Canadian stages including the Shaw Festival, the Tarragon Theatre, Banff Centre for the Arts, the Canadian Opera Company and the Stratford Festival. She has received 17 Dora Awards, a Gemini for her designs in television and the Silver Ticket Award for Lifetime achievement in the theatre. She will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree **Wednesday, June 15** at the Athletic Complex on Laurier's Waterloo campus starting at **9:30 a.m.**

Lillian Allen is an esteemed artist and educator as well as an award-winning and internationally renowned poet. As a Canadian pioneer of dub poetry, her writing, performance and legendary mentorship over the past 38 years has earned her several civic and artistic awards. Her works, *Revolutionary Tea Party* and *Conditions Critical* won Juno Awards in 1986 and 1988 respectively. She is a Faculty of Liberal Studies professor at the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD) and recently held the distinction of being the first Canada Council writer-in-residence for Queen's University's Department of English. She is the founder of the DubPoets Collective in Toronto and has led such programs as Fresh Arts, Native Women in the Arts and Black Arts Service Organizations. She will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree **Wednesday, June 15** at the Athletic Complex on Laurier's Waterloo campus starting at **2 p.m.**

Peter Wilkinson Howitt is a prominent economist and one of the most eminent Canadian social scientists. Over the course of his 40-year academic career, Howitt has made numerous important contributions to economics, including developing the new Schumpeterian growth theory, in partnership with Phillipe Aghion at the College de France and Harvard University. Howitt was a leading candidate for the 2014 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences. He has held distinguished positions such as the Lynn Croft professor emeritus of Social Sciences at Brown University, fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, past president of the Economic Association and Innovation Policy scholar at the C.D. Howe Institute. He will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree **Thursday, June 16** at the Athletic Complex on Laurier's Waterloo campus starting at **2 p.m.**

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William (Bill) Downe is a respected Canadian business leader and the CEO of BMO Financial, Inc. Downe graduated from Laurier in 1975 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and has since been an enthusiastic supporter of the university. Downe joined the Bank of Montreal in 1983, holding a variety of senior management positions in Canada and the United States. He was appointed CEO in 2006. Downe also serves on numerous boards and committees around the world, including the International Business Leaders Advisory Council. He has received several awards for his philanthropic impact on the business community, including the United Way Chair's Award of Distinction. He was also named one of Laurier's 100 Alumni of Achievement in 2011. He will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree **Friday, June 17** at the Athletic Complex on Laurier's Waterloo campus starting at **11:30 a.m.**

Bryce Walker will receive the university's Distinguished Governor Award on **Tuesday, June 14** at the **2 p.m.** ceremony at the Laurier Athletic Complex on the Waterloo campus. The award recognizes retiring and retired members of the Board of Governors who have given outstanding service to the university. Walker served as chair of the board from 2002-2005.

The **Order of Wilfrid Laurier University** will be presented to **Rev. David Pfrimmer**, professor of Public Ethics at Wilfrid Laurier University, co-director of the Centre for Public Ethics and former principal dean of the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. He will accept his award **Friday, June 17** at the **2 p.m.** ceremony at the Laurier Athletic Complex on the Waterloo campus. The Order of Wilfrid Laurier recognizes exemplary and distinguished service to the university by members of the Laurier community.

For more information on Laurier's convocation ceremonies, visit wlu.ca/convocation.

Laurier will also be celebrating its focus on teaching excellence by presenting several [teaching awards](#) at convocation.