

Kanienke'ha teacher receives honorary doctorate

By Nahnda Garlow

Brian Maracle; author, journalist and noted Kanienke'ha language teacher from Six Nations —has been awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Wilfrid Laurier University in Brantford this week.

Maracle has written for several national publications, bringing an authentic indigenous voice into the very public discussions. Along with his wife, Maracle also founded the full-time adult Mohawk immersion program, Onkwawenna Kentyohkwa, which has helped numerous Haudenosaune people reclaim the Kanienke'ha

language.

Dr. Owennatekha Brian Maracle humbly accepted the honour saying, "Kanienke'ha is now the first language of some young children growing up — something that hasn't happened at Grand River in more than three generations."

Maracle said, "I am very pleased with this honour today but I got my reward long ago - when I became able to speak with our elders in our ancestral language and I have been rewarded every day since. When I hear young people use Kanienke'ha as their language of choice to communicate with

the small but growing pool of young speakers - when I hear small children using the language to communicate with their parents - it lifts my heart."

Maracle said that the need for a renaissance in the traditional languages of the Haudenosaune is rooted in the Canadian policy of removing indigenous children during the residential schools. Maracle was invited to address the graduates of the class of 2015 - and he encouraged them to carry forward a spirit of thankfulness, thoughtfulness, kindness and respect in walking out their futures.

