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EDITORS: Coverage is invited.

Interviews with most speakers
can be arranged.

Family violence and neglect
topic for major WLU conference

More than 400 social welfare professionals will be at Wilfrid Laurier University Aug. 27 and 28 to attend a major international conference on family violence and neglect.

The conference is the first to be sponsored by the Centre for Social Welfare Studies, established earlier this year at the university. Co-sponsor is the Laurier faculty of social work.

Keynote speaker on Aug. 27 at 1:15 pm is Dr. James Garbarino of Chicago, widely recognized as an expert on child development issues and as an advocate for children and their families. He is president of the Erikson Institute for Advanced Studies in Child Development at Loyola University of Chicago. His topic: Expanding our concepts of helping situations of child abuse and neglect.

On Aug. 28, John Sweeney, M.P.P., Ontario minister of community and social services, will speak at 1:15 p.m., followed at 1:30 p.m. by the day's conference keynote speaker, Prof. Barbara Pressman.

She will discuss the power issues endemic to family violence with some suggestions for treatment.

Pressman currently is social worker in residence at the Laurier social work faculty, and is a well-known writer and speaker in the field of family violence. She has extensive experience as a marital and family therapist, and worked for 10 years with the Massachusetts public school system.

More than 45 seminars and panel discussions will be held during the two day conference on a wide range of subjects dealing with the main theme.

Some of the topics to be covered are: preventing child sexual abuse, feminist approaches to therapy and domestic violence, what we really know about preventing wife assault, group treatment for abusers, the role of police and courts in dealing with wife assault, educating children, and self-help networks.

"The conference format is designed to appeal to practitioners, academics, administrators and the many professionals dealing directly with abuse problems in the family," said Dr. Shankar Yelaja, dean of the social work faculty at Laurier.

"The conference will serve as a forum with opportunities for people who are working with innovative programs to share their experiences with researchers and other participants. We will attempt to come to grips with the problems and some of the solutions available."