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Richard Splane to speak at Laurier's fall convocation

Richard Splane, a distinguished Canadian social worker, will address about 470 graduands at the annual fall convocation of Wilfrid Laurier University at the Kitchener auditorium on Oct. 30.

It will be 77 years to the day since the official opening of Laurier's forerunner, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary.

Splane will also receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. An honorary doctor of letters degree will also be conferred upon artist Woldemar Neufeld.

A senior civil servant in Health and Welfare Canada from 1952 to 1972, Splane has been considered the principle architect of the Canada Assistance Plan, the basis for federal-provincial cost sharing for income security and social services.

He also played a critical role in the development of legislation enabling universal health care to be administered by provincial governments and partially funded by the federal government.

Internationally, he has served on committees of the United Nations and the International Council of Social Welfare.

He was awarded the Centennial Medal of Canada in 1967 and in 1985 was the recipient of the first award of the Canadian Association of Social Workers for outstanding national service in the field of social welfare and the profession of social work.

Now a professor emeritus of the University of British Columbia, he is currently involved in a comparative study of health policy in 26 countries.

A 1930 alumnus of Waterloo College School, Neufeld is well established as an artist in New York City, New England and the local area. He has maintained close ties with Waterloo Region and frequently features its scenes in his work.

The City of Waterloo recently acquired about 300 of his paintings to help establish a gallery in his name. The City, university and Conrad Grebel College currently have collections of his works.

The Russian native had already begun to train as an artist when he immigrated to Canada at age 15. After graduating from Waterloo College School, he studied at the Cleveland Art School, now the Cleveland Art Institute.

He returned to the area to marry Peggy Conrad in 1939 and settled in Cleveland before moving to New York City and then Connecticut.