

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Laurier to award six honorary degrees at spring convocation**

*Notables from the fields of science, business, music and law to receive recognition*

**For Immediate Release**

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will bestow five honorary degrees during spring convocation ceremonies for its Waterloo campus and a sixth during the first ceremony held for graduates of Laurier Brantford.

Laurier will bestow an honorary doctor of letters on world-renowned heldentenor Paul Frey and grant New Brunswick provincial court judge Graydon Nicholas a doctor of laws during ceremonies on June 7. On June 8, Laurier will present doctor-of-laws degrees to Thomas d’Aquino, president and chief executive of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, and to philanthropists Ross and Doris Dixon.

James Hillier, a Brantford native recognized for his contribution to the development of the electron microscope, will receive his honorary doctor of laws during Laurier Brantford’s first convocation ceremony at 6 p.m. on May 29 in Central Presbyterian Church.

“The people we recognize this spring have all made significant contributions in their respective fields,” said Laurier president and vice-chancellor Robert Rosehart. “We are always pleased to celebrate outstanding people, but it’s especially gratifying to be recognizing someone of Dr. Hillier’s accomplishments during Laurier Brantford’s inaugural convocation.”

Frey and Nicholas will receive their honorary degrees during the Friday ceremony for students in the faculties of arts, graduate studies, music and social work as well as the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. Both will address the graduates.

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D'Aquino and the Dixons will receive their degrees during the ceremony for the students in the faculty of graduate studies and science as well as the school of business and economics on June 8. d'Aquino will deliver a convocation speech.

Both ceremonies begin at 1:15 p.m. in the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex.

Born on a farm just outside Waterloo, Frey became serious about singing at the age of 21 when a hockey injury sidelined him for a week. He joined a local choir and began voice training at Waterloo Lutheran University (later named Wilfrid Laurier University), then enrolled in the opera school at the University of Toronto. He was hired by the Canadian Opera Company in 1976 and has performed across Europe, North America and Australia.

Nicholas was born a member of the Malisee Nation and raised on the Tobique Indian Reserve in New Brunswick. He received a BSc in mathematics from St. Francis Xavier in 1968, an LLB degree from the University of New Brunswick in 1971 and a master of social work degree from Laurier in 1974. He was the first aboriginal person called to the bar in Canada east of Toronto and was the first appointed to the bench in Atlantic Canada. Nicholas is noted for his leadership in native rights and aboriginal issues.

D'Aquino, a British Columbia resident, studied at the University of British Columbia, Queen's University and the London School of Economics and Political Science before serving as special assistant to former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau from 1969 to 1972. He ran his own consulting firm from 1975 to 1990 and is currently chairman of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives' Canada Global Leadership Initiative. As an active supporter of the arts, he serves as vice-chairman of the National Gallery of Canada Foundation.

Ross Dixon served as director of public relations and industrial relations for Uniroyal Canada for 31 years before retiring in 1977. He formed his own financial planning company, Ross Dixon and Associates, in 1978 and remains honorary chairman. Dixon served on the Laurier board of governors between 1979 and 1985. In 1998, Ross and Doris were both named honorary alumni. They have established a number of scholarships and awards for full-time business, music and science students.