

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Bob Rae to give inaugural Laurier Lecture in Canadian Studies

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WATERLOO – The Honourable Bob Rae, former Ontario premier and new chancellor at Wilfrid Laurier University, will deliver the inaugural Laurier Lecture in Canadian Studies from 4 to 6 p.m. on November 24 in the Paul Martin Centre.

The lecture will include a screening of the film *Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Romance of Canada*, which Rae narrated in 1999. The chancellor will then share his thoughts on what people today can learn from the life of Canada's first francophone prime minister.

“There are just so many links between contemporary Canada and our country at the start of the last century,” says Christl Verduyn, chair of Canadian studies. “The big issues of the day included the tension between French and English Canada, as well as free trade and our relationship with the United States. There's a great deal to learn about ourselves by looking at two points 100 years apart and Bob Rae has a tremendous understanding of the times and the issues from both periods.”

The film *Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Romance of Canada* is based on an acclaimed biography with the same title by historian and journalist Laurier LaPierre. Both tell the story of the leader that many historians, in a poll conducted in the late 1990s, named Canada's greatest prime minister with the most intuitive understanding of the stresses, strains and potential of the country.

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Laurier led Canada for 15 years at a time of uncertainty, turmoil and rapid expansion. He completed the task of Confederation and left behind a country far different and, many argue, far stronger than the one he inherited.

Bob Rae was elected to provincial or federal parliaments eight times and was premier of Ontario from 1990 to 1995. He has authored numerous articles and speeches on labour and employment law, public and constitutional law, changes in the modern state and the challenge of political leadership. His writings include the books *From Protest to Power: Personal Reflections on a Life in Politics* and *The Three Questions: Prosperity and the Public Good*.

Rae was appointed the sixth chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University this summer and installed during convocation ceremonies on October 26. His first official public function since convocation is the delivery of the first Laurier Lecture in Canadian Studies.

The lecture series is being launched by the university’s Canadian studies program to increase awareness of Canadian issues. Organizers intend that it will be held annually on or around November 20 – Sir Wilfrid Laurier Day. Future topics will reflect issues of interest and concern to Canadians, such as multiculturalism, Quebec’s place in Canada, regionalism, Canada-U.S. relations and Canada in the global arena.