

**For Immediate Release
November 11, 2009 | 101-09**

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Laurier hosts expert panel on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

WATERLOO – Laurier will host a panel discussion on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m. The panel is one of the first public events featuring people deeply involved in the TRC process on behalf of the Assembly of First Nations, the United Church and indigenous and settler communities.

The Canadian government formed the TRC in 2008, following the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It was designed to give those affected by the Indian Residential Schools the chance to share their experiences.

"The Indian Residential Schools, operated by Canadian churches and the Canadian government, created profound damage in indigenous communities, and to relationships between native and non-native people," said Dr. Sarah King, event organizer and assistant professor in Laurier's Religion and Culture department. "The TRC is one way that we can work together for healing and reconciliation by honouring the stories of those who were a part of the Residential School system."

Members of the panel discussion include:

- Mardi Tindal, moderator of the United Church of Canada
- Bob Watts, former interim executive director of the TRC and former chief executive officer and chief of staff, Assembly of First Nations
- David MacDonald, former MP and cabinet minister, advisor to the United Church of Canada, residential schools
- Jean Becker, elder-in-residence, Wilfrid Laurier University Faculty of Social Work

Both Watts and MacDonald were among the people who negotiated the establishment of the TRC as part of the Residential Schools settlement.

The panel discussion is sponsored by: Wilfrid Laurier University (Faculty of Arts, Department of Religion and Culture, Faculty of Social Work aboriginal field of study and professor Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, Canada research chair in international human rights) and St. Paul's United College at the University of Waterloo.

The panel will be held Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 7:30 p.m. in Laurier's Senate and Board Chamber. For more information, contact Dr. Sarah King, 519-884-0710 ext. 3117 or sking@wlu.ca.