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## **Buffy Sainte-Marie among honorary degree recipients at Laurier convocation**

WATERLOO — Award-winning singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie will join celebrated author Wayson Choy, distinguished educator Vera Good, and entrepreneur-philanthropist Francis Pang in receiving honorary degrees during Wilfrid Laurier University's spring convocation ceremonies in June.

Laurier will hold 10 convocation ceremonies in Waterloo the week of June 7-11, and two ceremonies at the Brantford campus on June 23.

Honorary degree recipients:

**Vera Good** had a long, successful career as a groundbreaking educator who played a significant role in establishing educational television in Ontario and abroad. Born in Waterloo in 1915, she left school after Grade 8 to work on the family farm. She later completed high school and eventually earned a teachers' certificate, BA, MA and PhD in education. She spent three years in India in the 1940s working with the Mennonite Central Committee. Upon returning to Canada, she resumed her teaching career and was one of the first woman principals in Etobicoke and the first woman inspector with Ontario's Ministry of Education. In 1966, she was asked to develop educational programming for public television. She was the first executive producer of *Polka Dot Door*, a children's program that garnered tremendous popularity during its 22-year run. Good retired from TVO in 1981 but later helped establish educational television programs in Jamaica and Belize. She will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree Monday, June 7 at the evening convocation ceremony at the Laurier Athletic Complex on the Waterloo campus, starting at 7 p.m.

**Wayson Choy** is a novelist, memoirist and short-story writer. His first novel, *The Jade Peony*, garnered international acclaim and won several awards, including the Trillium Book Award. Choy's second novel, *Paper Shadows: A Chinatown Childhood*, won the 2000 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction, which is administered by Wilfrid Laurier University. A former college English professor, Choy is well-known for his support and mentorship of young writers. In 2005, he was appointed to the Order of Canada. Choy will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree Wednesday, June 9 during the afternoon convocation ceremony at the Laurier Athletic Complex on the Waterloo campus, starting at 2 p.m.

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**Francis Pang** is an entrepreneur and philanthropist with a passion for education and Canada-China cultural relations. Born in Hong Kong, Pang studied computer science and business at the University of Waterloo. He launched his business career in China in 1973, first in the garment industry and later in the petro-chemical sector. In 1997, he established the Beijing Concord College of Sino-Canada, the first cooperative Canadian-Chinese school approved to offer Canadian high school curriculum to Chinese students in China. Since then, Pang has opened three more schools in China. Pang immigrated to Canada in 1985 and is now based in Toronto and Beijing. Over the years, he has invited students from Laurier's Faculty of Social Work to undertake work placements in his schools in Beijing and Shenzhen, and he has invited Laurier business students to conduct entrepreneurship workshops at the same schools. Pang will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree Friday, June 11 during the afternoon convocation ceremony at the Laurier Athletic Complex on the Waterloo campus, starting at 2 p.m.

**Buffy Sainte-Marie** is an award-winning singer-songwriter and passionate advocate for aboriginal rights and education. Born in Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan and raised in the United States, Sainte-Marie has won many awards for her singing and songwriting, including multiple Juno Awards, an Academy Award and, earlier this year, a Governor General's Performing Arts Award. She is an officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. Sainte-Marie earned undergraduate degrees in Oriental Philosophy and teaching, and a PhD in Fine Arts from the University of Massachusetts. In 1969, Sainte-Marie launched the Nihewan Foundation for Native American Education, which continues to help Native American youth and others learn about Native American culture. Sainte-Marie will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree Wednesday, June 23 during the afternoon convocation ceremony at Laurier Brantford, starting at 2:30 p.m. in the Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts.