

## NEWS RELEASE



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### Have a seat with Sir Wilfrid Laurier

**WATERLOO** – A bronze statue of a youthful Sir Wilfrid Laurier seated on a granite bench will be commissioned for Laurier's Waterloo campus to celebrate the university's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Laurier's Centennial Statue Committee selected the statue, designed by Canadian artist Marlene Hilton Moore, from among five proposals by three artists. The concepts featured Sir Wilfrid at various ages and in different poses. The group ultimately chose Moore's seated bench statue for its accessibility, its approachability, its playfulness and its youth.

"It has to be somebody you can get photographed beside. It has to be playful enough that students want to put a scarf around his neck," said Committee Chair Barry Ries, who is also an editorial/communications officer in Laurier's Research Services Office. "But despite his rather casual appearance, we still know who he is and what he will become. We are going to be very proud of our Wilfrid Laurier for generations to come."

Moore's seated statue also had tremendous support from members of the Laurier community, who were invited to comment on the proposals to help the committee in its decision-making.

"It's not just students who want something that is untraditional. This is everybody," said Ries, who noted the majority of comments came from faculty and staff.

The winning statue features a dignified Laurier in his mid-30s when he served as a Quebec Member of Parliament between 1874 and 1878. He is seated on a bench made of granite quarried near his birthplace in Quebec.

"I chose the younger Laurier because this is going to be in a university setting, and to me it was very important that the people of the university, who are predominantly students, have a relationship with him," said Moore. "I love to think someone could sit down on the bench and have a personal conversation with Laurier."

The bench statue was one of two proposed by Moore, who also suggested a standing Sir Wilfrid.

"Although I proposed both, I feel the seated option is more suited to a university atmosphere. It's more casual and this is a setting in which students are serious, but they are also full of life."

The statue will be unveiled in October 2011 to mark Laurier's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It will be located in the amphitheatre area in front of the John Aird Building on Laurier's Waterloo Campus. The exact location will be determined in consultation with the artist.