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Residential school survivor to speak at Laurier Brantford

BRANTFORD – A former residential school student will share his experience and healing journey as an adult during a guest lecture entitled *Indian Residential Schools – Conquering the Policy* March 7 at 7 p.m. at Six Nations Polytechnic and March 8 at 2:30 p.m. at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus.

Theodore Fontaine attended the Fort Alexander Indian Residential School from 1948 until 1958, and the Assiniboia Indian Residential School from 1958 to 1960. His memoir, *Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools: A Memoir* examines the impact of his psychological, emotional and sexual abuse, the loss of his language and culture, and the loss of his family and community. He goes beyond details of the abuses of Native children to relate a unique understanding of why most residential school survivors have post-traumatic stress disorders and why succeeding generations of First Nations children suffer from this dark chapter in history.

"We are very pleased to have Mr. Fontaine on campus to speak about his time in residential schools, and the impact on his life and how he is working to overcome the experience," said Tarah Brookfield, assistant professor in history and youth and children's studies at Laurier's Brantford campus. "Hearing Mr. Fontaine's powerful message about the destructive nature of the Canadian government's century-long residential school program will hopefully help students and others understand why First Nations people simply can't just get over it."

Fontaine served as chief of the Sagkeeng First Nation from 1979 to 1981, and has worked for the federal Secretary of State department, for the Northwest Territories Region of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as executive director of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and as strategic advisor to the Chiefs on Indian residential school issues. He currently serves as the chair of the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute in Winnipeg.

There are two public events scheduled:

- Thursday, March 7 at 7 p.m. at Six Nations Polytechnic, Grand River room, 2160 Fourth Line, Ohsweken
- Friday, March 8 at 2:30 p.m. at the Laurier Brantford Research and Academic Centre, room RCW 002, 150 Dalhousie Street, Brantford

The Brantford campus event will include a book signing and reception, with copies of *Broken Circle* available through the Stedman Community Bookstore.

For more information contact Tarah Brookfield at tbrookfield@wlu.ca or 519-756-8228 ext. 5792.