



Dorinda Kruger Allen, Development & Admin. Coordinator
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary
519-884-0710 ext. 3241 or dkrugerallen@wlu.ca

Lori Chalmers Morrison, Acting Director
Communications & Public Affairs
519-884-0710 ext. 3067 or lchalmersmorrison@wlu.ca

OCT. 8, 2013 | 134-13

Event at Laurier explores Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal treaties

WATERLOO – Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Wilfrid Laurier University's Office of Aboriginal Initiatives presents a speaker event titled, "Day of Dialogue: We are All Treaty People," taking place Oct. 22 on Laurier's Waterloo campus.

The event features two speakers: Rev. Stan McKay, Canada's first Aboriginal Moderator of the United Church of Canada (UCC), and Phil Monture, a Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River. They will share and discuss their perspectives and understandings of treaties as sacred agreements, which are significant for growing relations and respecting Aboriginal spiritual connection to the land and all creation.

McKay sought reconciliation and understanding both within and outside the UCC – Canada's largest Protestant denomination – and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. McKay comes from Fisher River, Manitoba, a Cree First Nation community. He is the former director of the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre, a First Nations theological centre that prepares spiritual leaders for ministry and provides cross-cultural education for the larger community.

Monture was the director of the Land Claims Research Office at the Six Nations of the Grand River. In 2002, he established Nativelands Ltd. to study and develop land tenure and land rights for Aboriginal peoples in Canada, the United States and Central America. In 2006, Monture's expertise was sought to assist with the Haudenosaunee Six Nations / Canada and Ontario negotiations during the confrontation at Caledonia Ontario and land encroachments throughout the Six Nations Tract.

The event is part of a speaker series titled "A Day of Dialogue," now in its third year. The discussion takes place from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Senate & Board Chamber, and will be moderated by Jean Becker, Laurier's senior advisor: Aboriginal initiatives.

"The Day of Dialogue was envisioned as a way to continue in some small way the work of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this region," said Allen Jorgenson, assistant dean of the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. "Stan will challenge us to live up to the reality that we are all participants in the treaties that are foundational to our life together, while Phil brings a particular expertise to the topic in the context of the traditional territory of the Six Nations of the Grand River Nation."

The event is free and open to the public.

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