



Tarah Brookfield, Associate Professor
History and Youth and Children's Studies
519-756-8228 ext. 5792 or tbrookfield@wlu.ca

Beth Gurney, Associate Director
Communications and Public Affairs, Brantford Campus
519-756-8228 ext. 5753 or bgurney@wlu.ca

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Ontario's first Indigenous lieutenant governor to visit Laurier's Brantford campus

BRANTFORD – Wilfrid Laurier University students will have history brought to life through the stories of James Bartleman, former Ontario lieutenant governor. Bartleman will visit Laurier's Brantford campus on Nov. 14, speaking to two classes about his diplomatic career and his work championing Indigenous children.

Bartleman spent more than 40 years as a public servant and was appointed Ontario's first [Indigenous lieutenant governor](#) from 2002 to 2007. In addition to serving as a foreign policy advisor to former prime minister Jean Chrétien, he also served as Canadian ambassador to South Africa, Cuba and Israel. Later in his career, Bartleman became an author of fiction and non-fiction works, including titles such as *Out of Muskoka* (2002) and *As Long as the River Flows* (2011). He is a member of the Chippewas of Mnjikaning First Nation.

Bartleman's appearance is part of the [People Make History](#) series hosted by Laurier's History Department at the Brantford campus. The annual lecture series, supported by funds from the late Mary J. Stedman, invites witnesses of historical events to tell their stories. Through this experience, students can connect to first-person accounts of history.

"Often in history, students are limited to learning by engaging with texts or artifacts. Unlike other disciplines, you can't go into the field and see history in action," said [Tarah Brookfield](#), associate professor and People Make History coordinator. "What we do is study stories, and being able to bring in the storyteller, someone who lived through a historic era and perhaps even changed history, offers students a unique opportunity to engage with the past."

Bartleman will be giving two talks: "Social Justice Fiction: Championing Indigenous Children" from 11:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. in the Research and Academic Centre – West, Room RCW 202 and "Making a Difference Diplomatically," from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Building, Room CB 206. Both lectures are open to community members with limited first-come-first-served seating.

During his visit to Laurier, Bartleman will also be joining Indigenous students, staff and faculty in the Indigenous Circle Room for lunch, and the History Students' Association and faculty members will host Bartleman for an on-campus dinner. These events will provide students with an additional opportunity to learn more from his personal experiences.

"The fact that Bartleman also has a BA in history speaks to the diverse career path open to students studying history," said Brookfield.