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SEPT. 28, 2021 | 092-21

## Laurier expert alert: National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

WATERLOO – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day are both held on Sept. 30. The federal holiday raises awareness about the history and legacy of the residential school system in Canada, honours children who survived the system and remembers those who did not.

[Gus Hill](#) is the Hallman Research Chair and associate professor of the Indigenous Field of Study in Laurier's Faculty of Social Work. He is an expert in Indigenous health and wellness, community capacity-building, community-based Indigenist research, and wholistic social work practice. His recently published book *Indigenous Healing: Voices of Elders and Healers* is available through [JCharlton Press](#).  
Contact: [ghill@wlu.ca](mailto:ghill@wlu.ca)

[Allen Jorgenson](#) is a professor and assistant dean at Martin Luther University College. He is an expert on comparative theology and theologies of religious pluralism, including how contemporary theology can be informed by Indigenous worldviews. Jorgenson is available to comment about reconciliation efforts between Christian denominations and Indigenous peoples. Contact: [ajorgenson@luther.wlu.ca](mailto:ajorgenson@luther.wlu.ca)

[Alex Latta](#) is an associate professor in the departments of Global Studies and Geography and Environmental Studies. He is an expert on natural resource governance and Indigenous rights, with a current research focus on Indigenous-led environmental stewardship, climate change adaptation and food security. He is working on several research projects in partnership with First Nations in the Northwest Territories. Contact: [alatta@wlu.ca](mailto:alatta@wlu.ca)

[Kelly Laurila](#) is a social worker, researcher and sessional lecturer in the Faculty of Social Work and is informed about reconciliation and decolonization, especially as it relates to relations between Indigenous peoples and police services and Indigenous child welfare policies. She has also studied how song and an ethical space of engagement can help bridge Indigenous and settler relations. Laurila is of Indigenous Sámi and Irish ancestry. Contact: [klaurila@wlu.ca](mailto:klaurila@wlu.ca)

[Percy Lezard](#) is an assistant professor of Indigenous Studies studying gender-based violence in Two-Spirit and trans communities; missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community; and health in First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Two-Spirit, trans, sex-worker, youth, Deaf/Hard of hearing and houseless communities. Lezard centres Indigenous knowledge, teaching and research methodologies in their work. They are a survivor of the multi-generational impacts of the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop. Lezard is *outma sqilx*<sup>w</sup> of the Penticton Indian Band in B.C. Contact: [plezard@wlu.ca](mailto:plezard@wlu.ca)

Lezard will be moderating four events in the [Indiqueer and Gender Diverse Speakers Series](#) from Sept. 30 to Dec. 9.

[Susan Neylan](#), an associate professor in Laurier's Department of History, is an expert on the history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada and is available to speak about the relationship between Indigenous people and the church in British Columbia in the 19th and 20th centuries. She is the author of [The Heavens are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity](#) and the co-editor of [New Histories for Old: Changing Perspectives on Canada's Native Pasts](#). Contact: [sneylan@wlu.ca](mailto:sneylan@wlu.ca)

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[Karen Stote](#) is an assistant professor in the Women and Gender Studies program. Her research has focused on colonialism and the history of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada. For her first book, *An Act of Genocide: Colonialism and the Sterilization of Aboriginal Women*, she documented the coerced sterilization of Indigenous women in Canada within the larger context of colonialism, the oppression of women and the denial of Indigenous sovereignty. She is currently studying the coerced sterilization of Indigenous women in Saskatchewan from 1970 to 2015 and the formation of family planning policy and practice in that province. Contact: [kstote@wlu.ca](mailto:kstote@wlu.ca)

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