

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

## Announcing MacEwan's 2026 Alumni Award honorees

*MacEwan celebrates seven alumni for their contributions in journalism, theatre, sport leadership, community service and health care*

**Edmonton** – MacEwan University is proud to announce the recipients of the university's 2026 Alumni Awards.

This year, seven outstanding alumni are being recognized for their dedication to making a difference in a variety of areas, including journalism, community service and health care.

The honorees are being recognized in two categories:

The [Distinguished Alumni Award](#) honours alumni who have demonstrated exemplary service and leadership within their profession and community.

The [Emerging Leader Award](#) recognizes recent graduates who have made significant contributions to their profession and community.

### **DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD HONOREES**

**Steve Jodoin** (Theatre Arts '04) is an actor, director and producer. He is the artistic director and general manager of L'UniThéâtre, Alberta's only professional Francophone theatre company, and co-founder of Productions Loft.

Jodoin has revitalized L'UniThéâtre through innovative programming and meaningful community engagement, renewing partnerships with Francophone and French Immersion schools and expanding youth tours that reach thousands of students across the province. His leadership fosters creativity, inclusivity and cultural pride.

Through Productions Loft, Jodoin has built one of Alberta's leading Francophone media production companies, creating award-winning projects such as *Cowboy Urbain*, which has aired in over a dozen countries.

Beyond his artistic success, Jodoin serves on national arts boards and mentors emerging creators, ensuring that Francophone voices continue to thrive. His vision and dedication have left an enduring mark on Alberta's cultural landscape, inspiring collaboration and connection through the power of storytelling.

**Dr. Ryan Payne** (University Transfer: Bachelor of Commerce '05) is an internationally recognized scholar and advocate whose work bridges artificial intelligence, ethics and the impacts of technology on creativity. As an associate professor at the University of Canberra, he founded the CanBe Lab – an innovative research hub exploring “what society CanBe with technology.” The initiative focuses on using technology to build inclusion, strengthen communities and inspire responsible innovation. He also serves as a United Nations (UN) delegate on AI governance.

A respected voice in global AI policy, Dr. Payne has presented to the UN and contributed to major international policies, including the European Union AI Act and Japan’s Propel AI Act. He is known for developing “Diet Code,” a concept that promotes efficient coding practices and more equitable digital systems, reflecting his commitment to fairness in global access to technology.

Dr. Payne also mentors emerging scholars, collaborates with organizations that include Qwestacon and the Internet Society, and advises national professional associations on AI ethics. His outreach initiatives include Bright Minds Lab, which supports youth tackling loneliness and cyberbullying; DiscoverE Camps, which introduce Grade 4 and 5 students to emerging technologies and digital safety; and Greenhorns Academy, which helps adults stay current in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Through creativity, compassion and collaboration, Dr. Payne continues to advance ethical, human-centred technology worldwide.

**Sheena Rossiter** (University Transfer: Bachelor of Arts '05) is an award-winning journalist, filmmaker and educator whose career spans more than two decades, 20 countries – and some of the world’s most significant historical events. Rossiter began her storytelling journey as a student before earning degrees from the University of Alberta and City St. George, University of London. Her early embrace of digital tools, such as livestreaming and mobile reporting, placed her at the forefront of innovation in global journalism.

As a foreign correspondent based in Brazil, the United Kingdom and Spain, Rossiter produced groundbreaking multimedia reporting for outlets including the BBC, CBC and Monocle. She later co-founded Dona Ana Films & Multimedia, producing acclaimed documentaries, such as *3 Siblings* and *The Perfect Match*, which highlight social justice and equity issues.

Currently, Rossiter is an assistant professor and the head of Media Production in the Department of Communication at MacEwan, where she combines her field expertise with mentorship to transform the university’s TV studio into a creative hub for emerging journalists and filmmakers. Through her leadership, she continues to shape stories told with empathy, integrity and innovation.

**EMERGING LEADER AWARD HONOREES**

**Winston Bui** (Bachelor of Science in Nursing '20) quickly distinguished himself as an innovative and respected leader in nursing. Since joining the Grey Nuns Hospital Intensive Care Unit/Critical Care Unit, he has demonstrated exceptional clinical expertise, compassion and leadership well beyond his years. Selected early in his career to train other nurses and become involved in high-impact clinical trials, Bui has earned the trust of colleagues and physicians alike.

As part of the Clinical Research Team at the Grey Nuns, Bui contributes to national and international research trials shaping the future of critical care. His calm, articulate presence has made him a frequent spokesperson for the team, presenting to international audiences alongside leading researchers from Harvard and McGill.

Beyond his own hospital, Bui has championed change across the nursing profession, advocating for improvements within Alberta and co-leading a nurse-led outreach initiative. And he continues to inspire the next generation of nurses, speaking to MacEwan University's fourth-year nursing students as an invited guest prior to their graduation.

Motivated by personal experience and purpose, Bui is currently pursuing a Master of Nursing in the Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Alberta. His curiosity and collaborative spirit continue to inspire his peers and advance nursing practice across Canada.

**Carley Jewell** (Bachelor of Science '20) is a scholar, mentor and community builder. Her leadership bridges sport, research and social impact. A former MacEwan Griffins Women's Hockey player (2015-2020), she transformed her experiences with concussion recovery into a research career, advancing psychosocial rehabilitation for athletes. Now a doctoral candidate in Applied Health Sciences at Brock University, Jewell's participatory research engages youth athletes and their support networks to co-create innovative social support programs that strengthen recovery outcomes.

Her work has been nationally recognized with awards from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Catalyst Grant as co-principal applicant, and multiple conference invitations across Canada and abroad.

Beyond academia, Jewell is a mentor and mental performance consultant-in-training with the Brock University swim team, where she applies sport psychology principles to athlete well-being. As an active Hockey Canada official and officiating coach, she also champions sport development and mentorship within her community. Jewell's blend of research excellence, empathy and service exemplifies a leader whose impact continues to grow across sport and scholarship.

**Sunpreet (Sunny) Johal** (Bachelor of Science '21) is a community leader, researcher and advocate dedicated to advancing equity, inclusion and systemic change across Alberta. He began his career as a project coordinator at StopHateAB, where he led a provincewide study on victimized community perceptions on hate crimes, coordinating over 20 focus groups and 300 participants. Johal's ability to engage communities with empathy and professionalism helped inform provincial policy discussions and strengthen victim-centred responses to hate incidents.

As the current president of StopHateAB, he has guided the organization through a period of significant growth, expanding partnerships with government, academia and grassroots organizations. His leadership has advanced major initiatives, including a provincial study on the mental health impacts of hate crimes.

Johal currently serves as a constituency manager in a local MLA's office where he identifies community needs, collaborates with local organizations and develops outreach initiatives. His proactive leadership and impactful work continue to inspire progress throughout Alberta.

Beyond his organizational leadership, Johal serves on several committees and boards, including the Edmonton Police Service Chief's Community Council, CapitalCare Foundation, Community Development Advisory Committee with Action for Healthy Communities, and Hockey Alberta's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. A current Master of Business Administration student at the University of Alberta, he continues to bring together research, policy and community engagement to help build a more inclusive province.

**Ofofile Emmanuel Onah** (Bachelor of Arts '16; University Transfer: Bachelor of Science '07) is a community builder, strategist and advocate whose leadership bridges health equity, justice reform and youth empowerment. As the current director of community initiatives at REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities, Onah helps lead strategy and delivery across initiatives that strengthen community safety, inclusion, newcomer belonging and youth well-being.

A seasoned non-profit leader, he previously served as director of operations at the Africa Centre, leading transformative initiatives including culturally safe vaccine clinics that served thousands across North Edmonton during COVID-19, and a free counselling program that supported African, Black and Caribbean Albertans.

Onah co-founded the African Canadian Civic Engagement Council (ACCEC), helping launch the Timbuktu Innovation Hub and establish Impact of Race and Culture Assessments, an initiative shaping equitable sentencing practices in Alberta's courts.

Recognized among *Edify* magazine's Top 40 Under 40 (2024), his work continues to strengthen pathways for inclusion, leadership and systemic change across Canada.

The Alumni Awards will be presented at a reception at MacEwan University on June 12.

To learn more and to nominate an alum who is making a difference in their profession or community, visit [MacEwan.ca/AlumniAwards](https://macewan.ca/AlumniAwards).

**For more information, please contact [archerj24@macewan.ca](mailto:archerj24@macewan.ca)**

*Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 90 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.*