

Thursday, June 12, 2025

Three new honorary doctorate recipients announced at MacEwan University

Edmonton – Beverley McLachlin, Bernie Makokis and Linda Wedman will each be awarded a Doctor of the University, *honoris causa*, and speak to the graduating class during [MacEwan University's Spring Convocation ceremonies](#).

“MacEwan’s latest additions to our growing list of honorary doctorate recipients are three truly inspiring individuals,” says Dr. Annette Trimbee, president and vice-chancellor. “We all look forward to hearing from Canada’s first woman chief justice of the Supreme Court of Canada when Beverley McLachlin shares some time with us. Bernie Makokis has spent decades working to help Indigenous people and he has touched thousands of lives in the process. And Linda Wedman’s level of involvement in the arts and culture scene in Edmonton is significant and she has been involved in so many of the pieces of public art with which we are all familiar. They are all tremendous examples of MacEwan’s strategic vision, [Teaching Greatness](#), in that they are trendsetters and trendbreakers.”

[MacEwan University's Spring Convocation ceremonies](#) will be held at Edmonton’s Winspear Centre from June 17 to 19, 2025.

Meet the recipients



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Beverley McLachlin

The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin is Canada’s first woman and longest-serving Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada (2000-2017). She adjudicated landmark decisions on Indigenous rights, freedom of expression, equality and the Constitution.

McLachlin's legal career began in 1969 when she was called to the Bar in the Province of British Columbia. From there, she rose through the judiciary system first to the Vancouver County Court, then to the Supreme Court of British Columbia in 1987. The following year, she was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

A well-known advocate for access to justice, the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law, McLachlin has delivered lectures around the world, sharing insights on human rights and ethical governance in addition to authoring books and essays that demystify legal principles for the general public. She volunteers with organizations such as the Canadian Institute for Advanced Legal Studies and the International Commission of Jurists. McLachlin is also a bestselling author of three novels, and a memoir, *Truth Be Told*.

A Companion of the Order of Canada (2018), McLachlin has a lengthy list of awards and recognitions, including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Law from the Canadian Bar Association. In 2019, she became a member of Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal, further extending her judicial influence on the global stage. She has also chaired the Canadian Judicial Council, the Advisory Council of the Order of Canada and served on the Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute.

Beverley McLachlin will receive an honorary Doctor of the University degree on Tuesday, June 17 at 9:30 a.m.



Bernie Makokis

Bernie Makokis is a pioneer of provincial policy for Indigenous education. Over the past 40 years, he has held a number of significant positions in support of Indigenous learners, including director of the Yellowhead Tribal Council and the Tribal Chiefs Institute, where he launched the groundbreaking First Nations Science Camp – the first in Canada.

His longstanding desire to build educational bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people led Makokis to create the Iyiniw Education and Training Institute, which is committed to education and

preserving the cultural values of First Nations people. He has also hosted more than 100,000 participants at the Knowing Our Spirits conference during the past two decades.

Makokis has received numerous awards, including Indigenous Educator of the Year, Inner City of Edmonton Education Award and federal awards recognizing his work in education. He recently received the King Charles III's Coronation Medal.

A respected Cree ceremonialist, Elder and Knowledge Keeper, Makokis has shared his sweat lodge as a learning and healing space for university students, doctors and other professionals, as well as Indigenous families throughout Alberta.

Makokis is a member of Saddle Lake First Nation and a survivor of Blue Quills Indian Residential School. He remains deeply connected to his cultural roots, emphasizing the importance of language and identity.

Bernie Makokis will receive an honorary Doctor of the University degree on Wednesday, June 18 at 2:30 p.m.



Linda Wedman

Linda Wedman's contributions to Edmonton's arts and culture scene are significant and familiar to many, both in events and landmarks. She founded The Works International Visual Arts Society in 1981 and is now the chief operating officer as The Works Art & Design Festival celebrates its 40th year.

Wedman was also one of the developers of the Neon Sign Museum in downtown Edmonton. The first of its kind in Canada, the museum features over 25 signs that provide a visual journey through Edmonton's history and is a notable contribution to the downtown's vibrancy and energy.

Wedman also played a critical role in developing the *Canada 2017 Capital Boulevard Public Art Legacy Project*, helping secure funding from three levels of government and downtown businesses to celebrate the country's 150th birthday. Sculptures, murals and a long list of public art pieces throughout Edmonton are in place thanks to her efforts.

With more than four decades of elevating Edmonton's reputation as a leader in the arts, Wedman's list of accolades and achievements is lengthy, including the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts Medal, Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee and Diamond Jubilee Medals, Alberta Centennial Medal and The Edmonton Salute to Excellence Award. She has also been inducted into Edmonton's Cultural Hall of Fame as a Builder of the Arts.

Linda Wedman will receive an honorary Doctor of the University degree on Thursday, June 19 at 9:30 a.m.

For more information, please contact 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.