

Land blessed by Elder in dedication ceremony for transformed Law building

(Windsor, Ontario - Monday, October 25, 2021) – Roughly a dozen people gathered in front of the Ron W. Ianni Faculty of Law building on Monday, October 25 for a private dedication ceremony. The ceremony was led by Windsor Law’s Elder in Residence Myrna Kicknosway and her helper in honour of the ancestors who have resided on the territory of the Anishinaabe people of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, the Ojibwe, and the Potawatomi.

“As a community, we were doing exactly what we were supposed to be doing to honour the ancestors,” says Elder Kicknosway, a Bodawatomi/Odawa Anishinaabe Kwe of the Loon Clan, residing at Walpole Island First Nation. “The synchronicity of being connected to Creation was indicated during the ceremony by the geese that flew by and the sounds we were hearing. It was important to do all of these things to acknowledge the Third Stopping Ground of Anishnaabe.”

Despite the rain, Monday’s dedication began with tobacco and smudging, followed by a prayer, three songs and a feast offering to the ancestors. Attendees voiced reflections of gratitude and acknowledgement of the need to do more to further the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action on campus and beyond.

“It was an honour to be part of this important and impactful ceremony,” says University of Windsor President and Vice-Chancellor Robert Gordon. “The generosity and experience of Indigenous elders, community members, staff, students and scholars has been essential to the Law School’s efforts to meaningfully work towards Truth and Reconciliation. The spirit of what is being built through these efforts is vital in supporting the future work that needs to be done.”

Ceremony attendees also included Dean of Law Reem Bahdi, Acting Associate Dean Wissam Aoun, Indigenous Legal Studies Coordinator Michelle Nahdee, Shkawbewisag Student Law Society Co-President David Pitawanakwat, members of the Windsor Law Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and Brown Bear Singers Animkeence Plain and Teresa Big Canoe.

“The ceremony will serve as a reminder of our commitments to being a justice-seeking, community-engaged and people-centred law school,” adds Dean Bahdi. “Keeping our TRC pledges sit at the core of these commitments.”

Earlier this year, the Faculty of Law building began an extensive transformation process which resulted in a disruption of the land. Through ceremony, the group was able to honour the spirits of the ancestors who may be resting on that land.

To learn more about the law school transformation, visit the [Transforming Windsor Law website](#).

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