The Symons Medal
Twenty Years of Reflection on an Evolving Canada
By Harvey Sawler. Foreword by the Honourable Bob Rae

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The Symons Medal : Twenty Years of Reflection on an Evolving Canada describes the origin and purpose of The Symons Medal since its inception in 2004, presenting biographical information, relevant quotations and photographs of the medal’s 27 recipients. The medal is awarded each year by the Confederation Centre of the Arts to recognize and honour Canadians who have made special and outstanding contributions to life in Canada. Symons Medal recipients are invited to deliver a lecture on the state of Canada’s confederation with reference to their expertise, field, and body of work. The intent is that this award and lecture help stimulate public discourse across the country.

"[Confederation] Centre has a responsibility to reflect the many identities in an evolving nation through arts and heritage programming, to understand and share the truth about all aspects of Canadian Confederation, and to contribute to reconciliation by acting as a convenor of voices."
— Gail Lord, Renewing the National Role of Confederation Centre of the Arts, 2022

Harvey Sawler has written 18 fiction and non-fiction books, covering the spectrum from celebrity, business, and crime to travel and entertainment. He is the former director of marketing and public relations for the Confederation Centre of the Arts, and, in 2014, authored the Centre's 50th anniversary commemorative book, The Centre for All Canadians—Five Decades of Inspiration and Excellence. Over 51 years, he has written hundreds of articles and stories for newspapers, magazines, and digital media forms, and he is a leading Canadian tourism consultant. He lives in Bellevue Cove, Prince Edward Island, with his partner, Charlotte Stewart. He lives in Bellevue Cove, Prince Edward Island, with his partner, Charlotte Stewart.

Why read this book?
• This book provides an exceptional platform to celebrate distinguished Canadians who concern themselves with the current state and future prospects of Confederation, and provide all Canadians an opportunity to reflect upon their country and its future,
• The book recognizes the immense contribution of Thomas Symons, who, as the Honourable Bob Rae wrote: “like every good builder he was never satisfied with just leaving things as they were. He was never weary in his well doing, and we are all the better for it,”
• The book also details how a new National Culture Leadership Institute will expand upon confederation Centre of the Arts’ rich cultural heritage and guides us as they plan for tomorrow.

The Symons Medal Series
August 13, 2024 | 11 x 8.5 | 112 pages
Print edition
9780776642215 | Hardcover | $69.95
Digital edition (Global Accessible)
9780776642222 | PDF | $29.99
Photos: 175
Keywords: Confederation; Canada; Canadians; Charlottetown; Tom Symons; Heritage; Arts; Symons Medal; public discourse
BIASC
PHI019000 PHILOSOPHY / Political
POL028000 POLITICAL SCIENCE / Public Policy / General
HIS006020 HISTORY / Canada / Post-Confederation (1867-)
POL032000 POLITICAL SCIENCE / Essays
Thema 1.5
JPHL Political leaders and leadership
JPFN2 Pan-nationalism
JBS Social groups, communities and identities
JPA Political science and theory
1KBC Canada
Onix Audience Code
28 / 01 General Trade

Symons Medalists (2004-2024)
The Honourable Jean Charest (2004)
The Honourable Roy McMurtry (2005)
Mark Starowicz (2006)
The Honourable Peter Lougheed (2007)
The Honourable John Crosbie (2007)
Ian Wilson (2008)
The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin (2008)
The Right Honourable Mary Simon (2009)
The Right Honourable David Johnston (2010)
Ivan P. Fellegi (2011)
David Suzuki (2012)
The Right Honourable Paul Martin (2013)
His Royal Highness Prince Charles, Prince of Wales (now King Charles III) (2014)
Stephen Lewis (2014)
Paul Gross (2015)
Antonine Maillet (2016)
The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau (2017)
Margaret Olwen MacMillan (2018)
The Honourable Murray Sinclair (2019)
The Honourable Bob Rae (2020)
The Honourable Louise Arbour (2021)
Shelagh Rogers (2022)
Michael Ignatieff (2023)
Dr. Philippe Couillard (2024)
Northern Ontario can be understood as a hinterland-colonial region. This book offers an overview and statistical reference source for Northern Ontario on population, employment, and urban concentration since 1871.

Although deeply experienced by Indigenous peoples, the settler-colonial structure of Northern Ontario’s development plays little explicit analytical role in official government discussions and policy. This “moose in the room”—hinterland-colonial conditions—deserves much greater attention.

This study provides original tables on Indigenous relative to settler populations, treaty and reserve areas, and provincially controlled “unorganized territories.” It examines colonial biases in the census data as a contribution towards decolonizing changes in official statistics.

More broadly, it offers an overview of major long-term population, employment, and urban concentration trends since 1871 in the region now called “Northern Ontario” (or “Nord de l’Ontario”). Based on original historical tables, the study discusses patterns of change at not only Northern Ontario regional level relative to Southern Ontario but also at the district and community levels.

Further, the study examines employment-population ratios, unemployment, and economic dependency, particularly for recent decades of decline since the 1970s, and it questions narrowly demographic explanations of population decline. Attention is given to the misuse and variety of dependency ratios in understanding Northern demographic conditions.

This research was based at Laurentian University in Sudbury and is a background study in the Northern Democracy Initiative.

David Leadbeater was raised in BC and Alberta. He taught in the Economics Department at Laurentian University from 1989 until 2021. His teaching and research interests are in the economic development of Canada, urban and regional economics, labour economics, and colonialism and economic theory. He holds degrees from the University of Alberta, Oxford University, and the University of Toronto. He is the editor of Resources, Empire and Labour: Crises, Lessons and Alternatives and Mining Town Crisis: Globalization, Labour and Resistance in Sudbury.

Why read this book?
• The only reference source for Northern Ontario for data on population, employment, and urban concentration for most decades spanning 1871-2021.
• New perspectives on the evolution of Northern Ontario as a hinterland-colonial region within Ontario including for district and urban centres, and on disparities within the region.
• Critical work on the quantitative dimensions of colonization in Northern Ontario such as on Indigenous-settler populations, treaty and reserve areas, and “unorganized territories.”
• An overview that is concise, yet also backed with detailed references and tables that can be updated with future censes.
• Original analysis on dependency measures, their misuse, and their significance in understanding population and employment conditions in Northern Ontario.
Dangling in the Glimmer of Hope
Academic Action on Truth and Reconciliation
Edited by Garry Gottfriedson, Victoria Handford

Discover the journey of reconciliation at Thompson Rivers University’s Graduate Programs in Education. With a focus on accurate narratives, indigenous leadership, and creativity, faculty and staff pave the way for transformative learning experiences, fostering harmony and understanding.

Embark on a transformative journey in this compelling narrative that brings together the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars at Thompson Rivers University. This book is a reference guide for the Canadian campuses’ path towards reconciliation.

Dive into the rich variety of stories that challenge and enlighten, as 14 faculty teaching in Graduate Programs in Education share their insights and experiences.

With a foreword by President Brett Fairbairn, the book sheds light on the university’s commitment to indigenization and offers a unique perspective from Garry Gottfriedson, a proud member of the Secwepemc nation.

Structured in four thought-provoking sections, each introduced with a reflective 400-word positionality statement, the book invites readers to explore the diverse facets of Indigenous identity. It showcases the creative expressions of Canadian Indigenous authors, each piece resonating with the themes of indigeneity that captivate them.

The book concludes with two powerful afterwords, weaving a narrative that is both personal and universal; the first by Garry Gottfriedson and Victoria Handford, and the second by Dorothy Christian and Janice Dick-Billy, both of whom are Elders in the Interior of British Columbia. Dangling in the Glimmer of Hope is more than literature; it’s a step forward in the collective journey of understanding and respect.

Victoria Handford is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education and Social Work and Coordinator of Graduate Programs at Thompson Rivers University. She has coedited three books on faculty experiences in mid-sized Canadian universities. She is known for her interest in the dimensions of education leadership and administration, particularly in K-12 settings, and their relationships to public policy.

Garry Gottfriedson is Cultural Advisor at Thompson Rivers University. With over 10 books published nationally and internationally, including 100 Years of Contact; In Honour of Our Grandmothers; Glass Tepee (nominated for First People’s Publishing Award 2004); Whiskey Bullets (Anskohk Aboriginal Award finalist) and many others, his work unapologetically unveils the truth of Canada’s treatment of First Nations. Gottfriedson is strongly rooted in his Secwepemc (Shuswap) cultural teachings.

Why read this book?
• A creative and academic book exploring reconciliation at a time in Canada when the calls to action are part of all course learning expectations, and when addressing these is critically important,
• Truly professional learning, which will result in course materials that may be useful to others, and a pathway forward for many organizations to consider when they are creating strategies that invite their teams to “find reconciliation” in their hearts and minds,
• It is strongly supported by Thompson Rivers University’s itself, as well as the Secwepemc nations. Given the prominence of the policy agenda, the Governments of Canada and British Columbia, to name two, will welcome the initiative as evidence of progress,
• The contribution of Indigenous author biographies is a significant benefit to Canada. It will be useful for many areas in universities and colleges, specifically in relation to literature courses. The creative writing component offers opportunity for discussion, reflection, and growth,
• The research done to create these biographies will be evidence to Indigenous communities that universities are working at reconciliation that is meaningful work.