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Singer-songwriter and activist Buffy Sainte-Marie to be granted honorary degree at Fall 2017 Convocation

A singer-songwriter, activist, educator, visual artist and philanthropist, Buffy Sainte-Marie will be presented with a University of Lethbridge honorary degree at the Fall 2017 Convocation ceremony.

“Buffy Saint-Marie has been a leader and longtime advocate for Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and around the world, consistently using her talents to bring light to injustice and intolerance,” says U of L Chancellor Janice Varzari. “We are thrilled that she has accepted our offer of an honorary degree and look forward to celebrating her career and furthering discussion on the important issues for which she continues to advocate.”



The University will present Sainte-Marie with the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, at the Fall 2017 Convocation ceremony on Saturday, October 14, 2017 in the 1st Choice Savings Centre for Sport and Wellness.

Buffy Sainte-Marie

Throughout her decades-long career as a singer-songwriter, Buffy Sainte-Marie has attained international popularity and been an iconic figure and role model for Aboriginal Canadians.

In her career, she has addressed topics that often remain hidden – abuse, women’s rights, equality, education and war. Her community work has allowed her to see the

effects of colonialism on indigenous people around the globe. These concerns became the themes for Sainte-Marie's music, teaching and artistry.

Despite being an early target of political criticism, she has continued to challenge oppression and inequities. In 1966, offered a lead role in television's *The Virginian*, Buffy's insistence that all the Indian roles be played by indigenous actors resulted in the first time Hollywood ever employed such an all Aboriginal cast to portray Aboriginal people.

In addition to her music, Sainte-Marie is a visual artist, a digital pioneer, and is involved in many education efforts. In 1967, she founded the Nihewan (Na-HEE-wan) Foundation for American Indian Education, and over the next 30 years she developed the Cradleboard Teaching Project to connect children from all over the world through science and other core subjects from within Aboriginal cultural perspectives. With earned degrees in education and Oriental Philosophy, in 1975 her concert career expanded to educating people about Native American cultures on *Sesame Street* for five years.

In 1997, she was named Native American Philanthropist of the Year, and in 1998, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Indian College Fund. She taught music and art at the Saskatchewan Federated Indian College (now First Nations University of Canada) and several other colleges.

Her musical talents and efforts to educate, whether from a stage, from a canvas or in the classroom, have earned her many awards. The song *Up Where We Belong*, which she co-wrote, won an Academy Award and a Golden Globe for Best Original Song in 1983. She was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1997, received the Governor General's Award in 2010, and the Polaris Music Prize in 2015 for her album *Power in the Blood*. In 2016, she received two Juno Awards for *Power in the Blood*.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/singer-songwriter-and-activist-buffy-sainte-marie-be-granted-honorary-degree-fall-2017>

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