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University of Lethbridge to recognize Elder Christina Fox with honorary degree

litsisaanoowa (Vision Beyond), Elder Christina Fox is a woman of devout faith and humility whose grace and kindness have made her a beloved presence in the schools within the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division. For her steadfast commitment to Indigenous youth, her leadership in education and the ongoing work of reconciliation, the University of Lethbridge will recognize Fox with an honorary degree at 2023 Fall Convocation.

As a First Nations Liaison Support Worker with the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division, Fox has spent her career providing a positive environment for Indigenous students, helping them understand Blackfoot culture, traditions, values and spirituality through participation in school powwows, drumming, beading, artwork and traditional naming ceremonies.



“Elder Christina Fox is such a positive force in everything she does. Her ability to educate and shed light on the darkness she encountered as a residential school student in a manner that uplifts the next generation is truly remarkable,” says ULethbridge Chancellor, Terry Whitehead. “We are proud to recognize the incredible work she continues to do, and the positivity she continues to share as she advances reconciliation within our communities.”

Fox will be presented with an honorary doctor of laws, honoris causa, at the 2023 Fall Convocation ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, 10 a.m., in the 1st Choice Savings Centre gymnasium.

litsisaanoowa, Christina Fox

litsisaanoowa (Vision Beyond), Elder Christina Fox has worked for the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division for over 20 years. During that time, she has shared her Blackfoot knowledge and traditions with students and staff at many of the division's schools. In her role as First Nations Liaison Support Worker, Fox has dedicated herself to ensuring today's Indigenous students never experience the same kind of environment she did as a residential school student. She treats each child with dignity and respect.

Her presence in the schools provides support and care to everyone, whether a child, a staff member, a parent or a grandparent. Fox shares her knowledge of the Blackfoot way of life and teachings, thereby tending to the spirit, soul and heart of those in her care. She offers Blackfoot language classes, drumming, beading, teepee teachings, information on the importance of land acknowledgements, serves as an Elder in Residence for kindergarten students and is a spiritual guide for staff. Fox is instrumental in planning celebrations, such as school powwows, that promote history and traditions and generate an awareness of and appreciation for Indigenous culture, heritage and language.

Her hours of service often extend beyond the school day. She will visit families in their homes in the evenings and on weekends to gently guide them, pray with them, and show they are cared for outside the school day. Fox also provides music ministry for Mass and serves St. Martha's parish as a Eucharistic Minister.

In 2016, Fox received the school division's Share the Mission award. This award honours those who have offered outstanding or long service, accepted demanding challenges, set new standards, contributed to the Catholic atmosphere in schools, demonstrated involvement and leadership in community or parish organizations and reflected the division's mission statement in their actions.

Each summer, Fox travels to Lac Ste. Anne, a sacred place of healing for Indigenous people. This annual pilgrimage allows her to embrace healing and her faith as a child who experienced residential schools. While the wounds of the past won't be forgotten, her strong faith and advocacy for youth and their families give her hope in the ongoing path of reconciliation.

Fox recently published a book titled *My Suitcase: Nii Sookayis*. The book begins with her first memory of residential school and is a story about triumph, celebration and sharing one's gifts.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/university-lethbridge-recognize-elder-christina-fox-honorary-degree>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.