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Prodigious writer and social advocate David A. Robertson to be awarded honorary degree

The ULethbridge Bookstore (SU210, Students' Union Building Food Court) will host a book signing with David A. Robertson on Thursday, May 29 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Acclaimed writer, podcaster, public speaker and social advocate David A. Robertson is a strong and influential voice on Indigenous issues who has the innate ability to empower young adults through his works.

Dedicated to ensuring children have access to books and championing accessibility to diverse literature, the University of Lethbridge will present Robertson with an honorary degree at Spring 2025 Convocation.



Robertson believes sincerely that children must always have access to books, even those that cover difficult and uncomfortable topics, and champions a scaffolding approach where age-appropriate content helps build understanding as readers mature.

“David Robertson writes from a place of honesty, and I think that’s why he resonates so deeply with his readers, many of whom are young adults who value the truth. His latest book, *All the Little Monsters: How I Learned to Live with Anxiety*, again broaches difficult issues but in a manner that invites the reader to a safe place of compassion and understanding,” says ULethbridge Chancellor Terry Whitehead. “He is a compassionate and compelling speaker, and we are fortunate to have David as one of our judges for the 2026 Bridge Prize national short story writing competition and very proud to be presenting him with an honorary degree.”

Robertson will be bestowed with an honorary Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, at Spring 2025 Convocation, Ceremony I, on Thursday, May 29, at 9 a.m. in the Centre for Sport and Wellness gymnasium.

David A. Robertson

David A. Robertson has never been fearful of heavy subjects. An Indigenous author, podcaster, public speaker and social advocate, Robertson often confronts difficult issues in his writing with an inherent honesty and openness that resonates with readers of all ages.

A member of Norway House Cree Nation, he currently lives and works out of Winnipeg. Robertson writes primarily for children and youth, opening minds to the strength of the written word and empowering new voices to be heard. Embracing Indigenous identity and culture, he presents important topics that contribute to understanding, healing, truth and reconciliation.

Robertson first garnered attention in 2012 with his seminal four-part graphic novel series, *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga*, an epic story that follows one Indigenous family over three centuries and seven generations. The works soon found their way into schools and libraries across the country, gaining appreciation from teachers and librarians alike as they inspired young readers and sparked meaningful conversations.

Extremely respectful of his audience, he never wavers from presenting the hardest truths while encouraging deeper levels of understanding. Robertson believes sincerely that children must always have access to books, even those that cover difficult and uncomfortable topics. Using a scaffolding approach, he presents age-appropriate content that builds understanding as readers mature.

His thoughtful and caring approach to broaching delicate subject matter has not only made his writing a favourite of young readers, but it has also garnered the respect of educators and parents. When one of his books was banned by a misguided school division for containing “too much culture and ceremony,” the ensuing uproar from parents, teachers and fellow writers soon saw the book returned to library shelves.

The honours and recognition for Robertson’s work are substantial. He’s a two-time winner of the Governor General’s Literary Award — in 2017 for *When We Were Alone* and in 2021 for *On the Trapline* — and was nominated for a third in 2020 with *The Barren Grounds*. In 2017, he earned the Beatrice Mosionier Aboriginal Writer of the Year Award, and in 2018, the first book of Robertson's *Reckoner* series won the McNally Robinson Best Book for Young People Award, the Manitoba Book Awards’ Michael Van Rooy Award for Genre Fiction, and the Indigenous Writer of the Year Award at the High Plains Book Awards. In 2021, he won the Writers’ Union of Canada Freedom to Read Award and in 2023, was recognized with an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Manitoba for outstanding contributions to the arts.

His continued commitment to creating space for emerging Indigenous voices has earned him an appointment as editorial director of a new children's imprint, Swift Water Books, dedicated to publishing Indigenous writers and illustrators, further advancing understanding and reconciliation.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/prodigious-writer-and-social-advocate-david-robertson-be-awarded-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.