



News Release

For Immediate Release
Jan. 19, 2016

REPRESENTATIVE TO ADDRESS HUMAN RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS CHILDREN

VICTORIA – Representative Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond will address the human rights of Indigenous children as part of the University of British Columbia’s Janusz Korczak Lecture Series *How to Love a Child* that continues this week.

The series honours the memory and teachings of Poland’s Dr. Janusz Korczak, an early advocate for children’s rights, including their right for human dignity and respect, and whose ideas remain highly regarded today. The *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child* is informed and inspired by Korczak’s theories.

“I am so honoured to be a part of this series,” said Turpel-Lafond. “Korczak was the first to recognize the human being in a child, and opened our eyes to the fundamental importance of the rights of a child. His own story – ending with his refusal of personal sanctuary and instead, walking out of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 to accompany 192 orphans being deported to the Treblinka extermination camp – is selfless and powerful. He boarded the trains with the children and was never heard from again.

“In looking at the human rights of Indigenous children, I will build on the ideas of this unwavering defender of children’s rights. There are so many opportunities to improve the outcomes for Indigenous children in our generation. We should not repeat the failures of previous generations that believed language, culture and belonging to an Indigenous nation were detriments to a positive future, rather than what they are – the key to healthy outcomes and an important recognition of self-determination.”

Turpel-Lafond will be joined by Dr. Mike DeGagné, President and Vice-Chancellor of Nipissing University. DeGagné was Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Chair of the Child Welfare League of Canada and previously held senior positions with the federal government. He is internationally recognized as an expert on the impact of residential schools on Indigenous people.

The *How to Love a Child* lectures – organized by the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada and the Faculty of Education, UBC – are free and open to the public.

Thursday, Jan. 21
Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre, UBC
6163 University Blvd., Vancouver

<http://jklectures.educ.ubc.ca/>
<http://www.januszkorczak.ca/>

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