

THE GATEWAY

volume XCVII number 44 • the official student newspaper at the university of alberta • www.thegatewayonline.ca • thursday, 29 march, 2007



PHILHEAD

LECTURESHIP IN HUMAN RIGHTS Littlechild spoke at the Myer Horowitz Theatre Monday night.

Speaker says int'l community must protect indigenous rights

TOM WAGNER
News Staff

Led in by a traditional sweetgrass and drum ceremony, Wilton Littlechild, one of the world's foremost authorities on international indigenous peoples' issues with a seat on the United Nations' Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, came to speak at the ninth-annual Visiting Lectureship in Human Rights at the University of Alberta on Monday night.

Following previous years' speakers such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Romeo Dallaire, Littlechild, the Alberta graduate and the first Treaty Indian to hold a seat in Parliament spoke on international issues facing indigenous peoples worldwide.

In a speech highlighted with humorous stories from a lifetime of advocacy work, Littlechild outlined the international indigenous people's

movement from its roots in the mid-'20s up until the present day, as well as the successes it has achieved in that period of time.

Littlechild credited the international indigenous people's movement with wide-ranging developments, such as the UN's acceptance of collective rights and the recognition of the family, environmental law and the right of people to self-determination. He also highlighted the plight of indigenous women and children, something discussed by the Permanent Forum.

"Imagine a child being born and being expected to live 20 years less than others, experience Third World diseases, live in overcrowded houses, receive poor education, routinely be made to feel ashamed for who they are, and be harassed by police," Littlechild said. "This is an indigenous child."

PLEASE SEE LITTLECHILD • PAGE 6

Mandatory retirement put to pasture at U of A

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

At the University of Alberta, 65 is a number and not an expiration date, according to a Board of Governors vote on 23 March to discontinue mandatory retirement for academic staff.

Dr David Johnson, President of the Association of Academic Staff: University of Alberta, noted that the world has changed since the concept of mandatory retirement was first introduced and that the vote follows decisions already made by other North America universities.

"In the initial stages we had to do the research to find out that a lot of the myths about ending mandatory retirement are just that."

DR DAVID JOHNSON,
U OF A ASSOCIATION OF ACADEMIC STAFF

"Back in the '20s or '30s, people were old at 65. A lot has changed medically, so that there's no reason why people can't work [past] 65," Johnson said.

Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) Larry Beauchamp pointed to improving the recruitment and retention of top academics as the main rationales behind the move. He noted that U of A professors approaching the 65 marker, who may have research projects and/or graduate students under their charge, previously would've

been easily drawn away to competing universities that don't have mandatory retirement.

"[And] when we were trying to recruit senior people, of course if you're recruiting somebody in their late 50s or early 60s, and they saw that you had mandatory retirement in three years or so, [the U of A] wasn't a particularly attractive place to move to either," Beauchamp added.

Last year, the U of A created a task force, which studied the issue of ending mandatory retirement. The task force's findings supported the decision, Johnson said.

"In the initial stages we had to do the research to find out that a lot of the myths about ending mandatory retirement are just that," Johnson explained. "That the actual cost is quite low—especially given the ability to maintain some expertise. The myth that only the incompetent stay is completely false. When you look at the research it's the people who are really good who want to stay two or three more years."

Beauchamp said that retirement trends studied at American institutions, where mandatory retirement had been eliminated for some time, showed that even with the option to stay indefinitely few professors clung to their academic posts.

"Looking at the American [statistics], we found for instance, that the average age of retirement for professors is normally about 62.5. [Eliminating mandatory retirement] raised it to something like 63.7—so it just added another year," he said. "And [of] those that stayed on after the age of 65—96 per cent of those people retired before they were 68."

PLEASE SEE RETIREMENT • PAGE 4

Helping depressed mothers

U of A researchers help new mothers suffering from postpartum depression recognize and respond to their babies various needs

BRYAN SAUNDERS
News Staff

Unlike other illnesses, postpartum depression affects not only the mother suffering from depression but also her ability to take care of, and therefore the health of, her baby.

With that in mind, a team of researchers at the University of Alberta, led by psychologist Dr Vivienne Jung, undertook a pilot study on postpartum depression and its effects on the baby.

The intervention, a program called Keys to Caregiving, teaches depressed mothers to understand and respond to cues given by the baby.

"Obviously the baby can't talk," Dr Robert Short, a member of the research team, said. "But they have facial expressions and body movements and hand movements and so on. The program essentially teaches the mother how to respond appropriately even though they're depressed."

He explained that while there are ways of treating postpartum depression in the mother, they're neither straightforward nor guaranteed to work.

"There is medication, sure, but there are

problems with medications, particularly if the mother is breastfeeding, because of the effects of the medication on the baby itself. There are other approaches that deal in a therapeutic way with the mother's depression, mainly talk-therapists and support groups with similar[ly] situated women," Short stated.

Few of these approaches, he continued, directly improve the situation of the baby. Therefore, the focus of the research was to turn away from treating the mother and to focus on how to improve the mother's interactions with the baby.

"If we can get the mother to, even though she is depressed, go through the repertoire of skills and interactions that are taught in this type of intervention then at least the baby's development is not being hampered and affected by her depression," Short explained.

He acknowledged that the health of a new mother is very important and that any depression on her part is very troubling. However, he added that it's also important that the development and health of the baby isn't neglected.

PLEASE SEE DEPRESSION • PAGE 4

Inside

News	1-7
Opinion	8-12
Feature	14-15
Sports	16-20
A&E	21-24
Classifieds	25
Comics	27



We're here all week

So, what's the deal with stand-up comedy? Our resident laughotologists hit an open-mic night to find out.

FEATURE, PAGES 14-15



Spring is sprung

The grass has riz; wonder who'll win the NL East? We've got all that and more in our baseball season preview.

SPORTS, PAGE 18