



# THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

## NEWS RELEASE

---

**May 11, 2006**

**For Immediate Release**

### **Helen Betty Osborne Remembered: UWinnipeg Building Named in Her Honour**

WINNIPEG—The University of Winnipeg will name the building housing the University's Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre and other Aboriginal education initiatives in honour of Helen Betty Osborne. University of Winnipeg President and Vice-Chancellor Lloyd Axworthy will make the announcement tonight at the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation's fourth annual Gala Dinner at the Delta Hotel, 350 St. Mary Avenue (commencing at 6:45 p.m.)

Helen Betty Osborne was only 19-years-old and still in high school in The Pas when her life came to a violent end in 1971 and her aspiration of becoming a teacher tragically cut short. It took 16 years for charges to be laid in Helen Betty's Osborne's brutal sexual assault and murder; a result the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry concluded was due to racism, sexism, and indifference.

Helen Betty Osborne's terrible loss was profiled in Amnesty International's October 2004 report *Stolen Sisters*, an exemplar of Canada's shameful lack of concern toward the discrimination and violence experienced by so many Aboriginal women.

“With this naming, we recognize and remember Helen Betty Osborne, as well as the many other Aboriginal women whose lives have been marked by violence,” said University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy. “Thanks to the hard work of her family and the Foundation that bears her name, Helen Betty Osborne stands as a symbol of hope for young Aboriginal people; her commitment to education an inspiration to us all.”

Through The University of Winnipeg's innovative Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP), and Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) ACCESS Program—all located in the Helen Betty Osborne Building at 509-511 Ellice Avenue—the Aboriginal community has new educational

opportunities and possibilities. Resources range from access to the RBC Community Learning Commons state-of-the-art computer lab to one-on-one homework help by UWinnipeg Education students.

“It is such a privilege to see The University of Winnipeg bear the name of Helen Betty Osborne. This distinction will continually raise awareness of who she was and the greater cause that was created as a result of her tragedy. The Osborne family and the Foundation are extremely honoured this institution has chosen Helen Betty’s name to continue keeping her dream alive,” said Marcy Richard, Chair, Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation. “Helen Betty’s dream of becoming a teacher will always be remembered, and the work of the Foundation is reflected by the growing number of Aboriginal students that enter this campus.”

The University of Winnipeg is working with the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation to plan an event in the next few months to officially name the building, at which time a plaque commemorating Helen Betty Osborne will be unveiled in the lobby of the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre. The plaque will serve to permanently honour Aboriginal women and encourage all young Aboriginal people to achieve their potential through education.

*Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their “Entire Educational Experience” (Maclean’s Graduate Survey, November 2004). The Globe & Mail 2005 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall ‘A’ grade in the areas of teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit [www.uwinnipeg.ca](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca)*

-30-

For more information, please contact:

Katherine Unruh, Director of Communications  
The University of Winnipeg  
C: 204.293.7100      Email: [k.unruh@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:k.unruh@uwinnipeg.ca)

Or

Ilana Simon, Communications Officer  
The University of Winnipeg  
T: 204.786.9930      C: 204.782.3279      Email: [i.simon@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:i.simon@uwinnipeg.ca)