

Bringing Research to LIFE

In Brief

Dr. Dak a 'Classic'

The Cambridge University Press, one of the largest academic publishers in the world, is including the work of Faculty of Medicine emeritus Prof. Krishnamurti Dakshinamurti in their "Classic Series" of research accomplishments.

In 1994, the biochemistry and molecular biology researcher (known as Dr. Dak) edited *Vitamin Receptors*, a compilation of works by global experts and published by Cambridge. The publishing house is now including this title in their "Classic Series" and republishing it in paperback form.

Dakshinamurti's laboratory was the first to prepare a monoclonal antibody against biotin in the early 1980s, and for the past 25 years the clone isolated in his lab has been the source of all biotin monoclonal antibody used anywhere in the world.

He is currently a senior advisor to the St. Boniface Research Centre, evaluating the scientific status of its programs in comparison with similar groups and institutions in Canada. He is also editing a book on the "biology and therapeutic potential of vitamins and biofactors" for publishers Taylor and Francis.

Upcoming

STUDENT Poster Competition

Monday, November 9, 2009

1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Manitoba Rooms 210-224

University Centre

For more info phone 474-7952 or e-mail johanne2@cc.umanitoba.ca

Bringing Research to LIFE Speaker Series

Governing in Accordance with the Treaties

With Kiera Ladner

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

7:00 PM

Room 290 Education Building

FREE Admission

More info:

www.umanitoba.ca/research

Treaties Today

Aboriginal governance researcher describes historical documents as tools for change

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS

A framed black-and-white photograph of three young girls sits on a shelf in Kiera Ladner's office, next to scores of books about Canadian politics. The photo of the girls, cuddled in close, one of them clutching a doll, is special to the political studies professor for a few reasons: not only are the smiling youngsters her adored nieces, they represent the future.

"When I think about why I do what I do, I think about those coming generations," says Ladner.

Her research focuses on Aboriginal governance, in particular the huge impact colonialism has had on Indigenous Peoples and the search for a way "we can all live here together in a mutually agreeable and mutually beneficial manner," she says. Ladner learns from Elders and pores over historical treaties going back 200-plus years (some of them signed with blood), in addition to memoirs and journals written by non-indigenous people who negotiated these agreements.

For Aboriginal people, treaties were a vehicle to cope with settlers who wanted to share their land. These documents didn't discuss "one controlling another. It was about both nations living under the Queen," says Ladner, whose research suggests the British saw things differently.

"While the Queen's people were negotiating for as long as the sun shines and the grass grows and the water flows – which is the text of almost every treaty – they were thinking that Aboriginal people would be dead in 50 years and there would be no treaty obligations."

Colonialism 101

The state of First Nation reserves today is a lesson in "colonialism 101," says Ladner, noting the tremendous economic and cultural "dispossession" of Aboriginal people that followed. She says while most Canadians are aware of the "absolutely appalling" details surrounding the residential schools scandal, most don't know anything about Aboriginal history or the many Canadian policies that caused economic suffering.

Ladner says the more she familiarizes herself with treaties, the better equipped she is to come up with new ideas about how we can all live side by side more harmoniously. She describes herself as "a bridge-builder" and would like to see the relationship depicted in treaties become reality.

"My work is really about how we move on, and I use the treaties as the tool box. Although they weren't followed, they are there legally. Those treaties are what allow the Canadian government to be here. So when you look at it constitutionally, treaties are the bedrock," explains Ladner, noting it's a topic that is discussed more frequently now that treaty-related legal cases have hit the Canadian court system.

A Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Politics and Governance,



Photo by Katie Chalmers-Brooks

Faculty of Arts professor Kiera Ladner says treaties are "the bedrock" of our constitution.

Ladner said her efforts are futile if her research doesn't make sense to everyday people in the community. Soon, she'll invite a few dozen Aboriginal youth from across the province to the university. Not only will she get these young people involved in her research, she'll introduce them to post-secondary education. And before long, she'll have a physical space where she can make this happen.

Ladner recently received funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Manitoba Research and Innovation Fund to establish a research centre called Mamawipawin (Cree for gathering place) on the fourth floor of the Isbister Building. The space will have an adjacent lab to record interviews and house a digital archive.

Hawaiians

Ladner's quest for knowledge also extends south of the border to Indigenous Peoples in Hawaii, which was illegally occupied by the United States in 1887. Ladner said the move had similar negative effects on the Aboriginal population there as it has here. She has been working with Indigenous Hawaiians who have been actively reclaiming their culture, language and control over their land during the last four decades.

"Some of the lessons I'm learning there are things I would like to bring back here," she says.

Ladner acknowledges that change doesn't happen overnight but she is determined to contribute in some way. If

relations don't improve, she fears there will be more resistance similar to the Oka Crisis in 1990 when the Quebec town tried to build a golf course on Aboriginal burial ground land to the dismay of the Mohawk nation.

"If we don't work on both sides of the problem, I see another Oka – but something far more catastrophic and far greater. If we can manage to rebuild, to fully engage in reconciliation, I see a Canada based on the treaties," Ladner says.

She is currently compiling a collection of works by indigenous and non-indigenous academics, activists, and poets about the impact of the Oka Crisis. *This is an Honour Song: 20 Years after the Blockades* is scheduled to launch July 11, 2010, two decades to the day that a SWAT team stormed the site. Ladner says very little progress has been made since the crisis, which is "disheartening" for the Mohawk people involved and which drives her to find solutions through her research.

"I don't want to see any kids, any young people on a blockade with guns, facing off with military ever again," she says. "But the reality is: that's what's going to happen if something doesn't change. And what is Canada going to do? Either we start to engage in these issues now and learn now or we face each other at a blockade."

To learn more, come to a free public presentation by Ladner called 'We are all Treaty People: Governing in Accordance with the Treaties' Nov. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Education Building, Room 290.