



## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

**Honorary Degree Citation**  
**The degree of Doctor of Laws,**  
**conferred on Dr. Phyllis Webstad**  
**Friday, October 6, 2023**

Madam Chancellor, it is my immense honour to introduce Phyllis Webstad, a beacon of resilience and hope. A wife, mother, grandmother and third generation survivor of Canada's Indian Residential School system, she stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of Indigenous People.

On Sept. 30, 2023, we marked the 10th anniversary of Orange Shirt Day—a day inspired by Ms. Webstad's poignant story, emphasizing the importance of truth and reconciliation across our nation and beyond.

Hailing from Northern Secwépemc (Shuswap) of the Stswecem'c Xget'tem (Canoe Creek/Dog Creek) First Nation, six year old Phyllis faced a heart wrenching experience. On her first day at residential school, her cherished orange shirt—given to her by her Granny and symbolizing a life full of love and warmth, was taken from her by force. This act, transformed the color orange into a reminder of stolen innocence and a disconnection with life as she knew it.

At 13 she had a son, who she raised with the help of her aunt. And in 2013, while in her late forties, Ms. Webstad courageously shared her orange shirt story at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School Commemoration Project and Reunion – <https://www.sjms.ca/commemoration-project-and-reunion> and the <https://www.sjms.ca/commemoration-project-and-reunion> *Emmy Child Matters*. Her story significantly amplified our understanding of Canada's colonial history.

Orange Shirt Day, now also commemorated as the National Day

of Truth and Reconciliation, has started essential dialogues in classrooms, businesses, and communities about the enduring impacts of residential schools and the path towards reconciliation.

For her unparalleled commitment to this important work, I ask that you now confer upon Phyllis Webstad the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.