

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Dr Dawn Lavell-Harvard to Receive the 2018 Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award**  
*Award ceremony to take place during the Annual Tribute fundraising event*



**Toronto: May 9, 2018** – The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic is proud to announce Dr Dawn Lavell-Harvard as the 2018 Spirit of Barbra Schlifer Award recipient. The Award, sponsored by Torys LLP, is given annually to a woman whose work is dedicated to improving the lives of women experiencing violence.

Dawn is the Director of the First People’s House of Learning at Trent University. Previously, she was the President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC), where she played an instrumental role in the appointment of an independent commission to investigate the disproportionate rate of violence against Indigenous women. Along with her colleagues, she led a tireless campaign to raise national attention and pressure on the federal government to recognize and act on the disparate number of indigenous women who had either gone missing or had been murdered. Her persistence, while presiding at NWAC, culminated in the launch of a national inquiry into Canada’s missing and murdered Indigenous women.

“We couldn’t conceive of a more deserving candidate to receive the Award this year,” says Amanda Dale, the Clinic’s Executive Director. “Dawn has dedicated not only her work but her life to improving the conditions experienced by Indigenous women drawing critical attention to their heightened risk for violence. Her formal advocacy began in 1994 as a youth director on the board of the Ontario Native Women’s Association, and she has not looked back since.”

Dawn will receive the Award on June 7, at the Annual Tribute, the largest fundraising event for the Barbra Schlifer Clinic. The Tribute event, hosted by Blakes LLP, will feature CBC’s Kim Convenience star, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee, as the evening’s master of ceremonies.

“Torys is honoured to have Dr Dawn Lavell-Harvard as this year’s recipient,” says Sarah Whitmore, Schlifer Clinic Board Member and Senior Associate at Torys LLP. “Torys is deeply committed to the community and takes its role in affecting positive change seriously. We admire Dawn’s fortitude to right a historical wrong to benefit Canada’s Indigenous women.”

The Annual Tribute will take place on Thursday, June 7 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Daniels Spectrum, located at 585 Dundas Street East. To purchase tickets, please call (416) 323-9149 or go to [www.schliferclinic.com/tribute](http://www.schliferclinic.com/tribute)

#### **About Dawn Lavell-Harvard**

Dr Dawn Lavell-Harvard is a proud member of the Wikwemikong First Nation on Manitoulin Island and former President of the Native Women's Association of Canada. An alumna of Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario, Dawn has dedicated the academic part of her career to the study of Education, including the experiences of Indigenous women and girls in Canadian secondary and postsecondary school systems.

Dawn's accomplishments include being named a member of the Independent Advisory Board on Senate Appointments, receiving an honorary doctorate of Education by Nipissing University, being Canada's first Indigenous Trudeau scholar, and publishing a number of articles and books discussing Indigenous mothering practices and the effects of colonization and governmental oppression on Indigenous mothers. She has worked to advance the rights of Indigenous women as the President of the Ontario Native Women's Association.

In 2016, Dawn resigned from her position as the President of Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), where she played an instrumental role in the launch of the inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women. While at its helm, NWAC released a list of 22 recommendations to help guide the inquiry, created with the help of indigenous female leaders, family members of murdered and missing indigenous women, and human rights experts from the United Nations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Dawn currently works as Director of the First People's House of Learning at Trent University. She is also a full-time mother to three young daughters.

#### **About Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic**

The Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic is a specialized clinic for women experiencing violence, established in the memory of Barbra Schlifer – an idealistic young lawyer whose life was cut short by violence on the night of her call to the bar of Ontario on April 11, 1980. In her memory, the Clinic is a multi-disciplinary, front-line service provider that assists nearly 4,000 women a year to build lives free from violence through counselling, legal representation, and language interpretation. Since it was founded in 1985, the Clinic has assisted more than 60,000 women.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview with Dawn Lavell-Harvard or Amanda Dale, please contact:

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