



MEDIA RELEASE

June 6, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More than 2,000 to graduate this spring 7 ceremonies to be held June 10-12

More than 2,000 graduates of Niagara College will receive diplomas, degrees or certificates during seven spring convocation ceremonies to be held at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus.

The ceremonies will take place in the gymnasium/cafeteria complex on Tuesday, June 10 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Wednesday, June 11 at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Thursday, June 12 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Distinguished business, hospitality, government, educational, health, and entertainment leaders will also be honoured during the convocation ceremonies. This year's ceremonies feature a list of accomplished convocation speakers and honourees, including:

- **Anna Olson**, Food Network personality, proprietor, Olson Food + Bakery, June 10 at 2 p.m. Ms Olson will receive an Honourary Diploma in Broadcasting – Radio, Television and Film;
- **Ken Fowler**, Entrepreneur, June 10 at 7 p.m. Mr. Fowler will receive an Honourary Bachelor of Applied Studies degree;
- **Dr. Douglas Sider**, Associate Medical Officer of Health, Niagara Regional Public Health, June 11 at 10 a.m. Dr. Sider will receive an Honourary Bachelor of Applied Studies degree;
- **Mark Basciano**, Owner and President, Mountainview Group, June 11 at 2 p.m. Mr. Basciano will receive an Honourary Diploma in Construction Engineering Technology – Architecture;
- **Ameer Wakil**, Chief Operating Officer, White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa, June 11 at 7 p.m. Mr. Wakil will receive an Honourary Diploma in Hospitality Management – Hotel and Restaurant;
- **Brian Hutchings**, Commissioner of Community Services, Niagara Region, June 12 at 2 p.m. Mr. Hutchings will receive the Niagara Award, which honours Niagara residents who make an outstanding contribution to the community.
- **Jim Ryan**, Retired Executive, and Chair, Niagara College Board of Governors, June 12 at 7 p.m. Mr. Ryan will receive an Honourary Bachelor of Applied Studies degree.

The Niagara-on-the-Lake Campus is located at 135 Taylor Rd., Niagara-on-the-Lake.

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****Background information is attached***

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Anna Olson – June 10, 2 p.m.,

Hailing from Atlanta, Georgia, Anna Olson considers herself a "Canadian gal" after growing up in Toronto, and living in Niagara for more than 10 years. Earning a degree in Political Science and Sociology from Queen's University, Olson found her calling in Vail, Colorado, at Johnson & Wales University studying cooking.

After spending some time in the US, Olson came to the Inn on the Twenty in Jordan, where she fell in love with the cooking styles of Michael Olson and eventually with Michael. Leaving the Inn, Olson joined Food Network Canada as the host of Sugar, and Kitchen Equipped, which also aired on HGTV. Her latest show, Fresh with Anna Olson, is broadcast from her Niagara Region home, and promotes her motto "eat fresh, eat local."

Olson has also written two cook books and co-authored two more with her husband, Michael. She also writes for various publications, including Vines, LCBO Food & Drink, and a co-written column with her husband for the St. Catharines Standard.

Giving back to the community, Olson supports the Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre, which provides hospitality training to women. She participates in a number of fundraisers, and her end-of-day product from the bakery is given to the local YMCA women's shelter or the Out of the Cold Program. Olson also sits on the board for the Adolescent Family Support Services of Niagara, which provides educational daycare support for young mothers.

Ken Fowler – June 10, 7 p.m.,

While Ken Fowler's business began primarily in the real estate and hospitality industries, it has evolved into a broad spectrum of additional entrepreneurial activities.

Ken is the founding partner of Red Leaves.

Encompassing over 1400 acres of beautiful Muskoka landscape, including The Rock championship golf course, this master-planned waterfront resort is destined to become one of Muskoka's most prestigious and sought- after resort home opportunities.

He is Chairman of Fairmont Hot Springs Resort and West 49 Inc., a Toronto Stock Exchange listed Company.

Ken is also a Director of SIR Corp., a multi-concept Restaurant Company whose operations include Jack Astor's Bar and Grill, Loose Moose, Alice Fazooli's, Canyon Creek Chophouse, Far Niente, Four, and reds in Toronto.

His current real estate interests include investments in land, subdivisions, home building, shopping malls and hotels in Ontario, as well as Ohio in the United States.

Other active business investments include an ownership position in Academy of Learning, Cango Inc., ForestCare Inc., J. Michaels Inc. and Sinclair Computer Forms.

He is past Chair of the Board of Trustees of Brock University.

Dr. Douglas Sider – June 11, 10 a.m.,

Dr. Doug Sider has served as Associate Medical Officer of Health for the Niagara Region since October of 2002.

He graduated from the University of Toronto Medical School in 1977. Following internship and primary care work in British Columbia, Dr. Sider worked for four years for the Ministry of Health of Mozambique, spending two years as a District Medical Officer in the northern part of the country and a further two years training primary health care workers. Upon returning to Canada in 1984 he spent four years working at the Parkdale Community Health Centre in Toronto. He then undertook four years of specialty training in Community Medicine at McMaster University.

Dr. Sider obtained his Fellowship with the Royal College of Physicians of Canada with a specialty in Community Medicine in 1992. He has substantial public health experience at local, regional and provincial levels, with his main interests being communicable disease prevention and control and environmental health. Before coming to Niagara, Dr. Sider worked for five years as Associate Medical Officer of Health in Waterloo Region and more than four years as Medical Officer of Health for Brantford/Brant County. He currently serves as Co- Chair of the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, and has a part-time Assistant Professor faculty appointment with McMaster University's Department of Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics. He also provides infection prevention and control consultation for the Niagara Health System.

Dr. Sider lives in Hamilton with his wonderfully challenging and energetic 13 year old son, and admiring at a distance the progress of his 20-year-old son at McGill University.

Mark Basciano – June 11, 2 p.m.,

Mark Basciano is the Owner and President of the Mountainview Group of companies, which includes Mountainview Homes, Mountainview Custom Homes, Mountainview Construction and Mountainview Properties.

The award-winning Thorold company was formed in 1979 and is a market leader and premier homebuilder in Niagara.

Prior to his current role, Mark was the General Manager of the Embassy Suites in Thorold, and Special Events Coordinator for Molson Breweries. He is a member of the Board of Meridian Credit Union and sits on Meridian's Credit and Investment and Community Relations Committees. He is also the President of the Ontario Home Builders Association, a Director of Community Leaders Invitational, a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association of Niagara and a member of the St. Catharines, Thorold and Niagara Falls Chambers of Commerce.

Like the company he leads, Mark is community-minded and lends his time to many charitable endeavors that benefit local charities and agencies, including the March of Dimes, the Niagara Children's Centre, and Wellspring Niagara.

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Ameer Wakil – June 11, 7 p.m.,

Twenty-three years ago, Ameer Wakil began his career at the White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where he currently acts as the Chief Operating Officer.

Wakil's commitment to the philosophy of wellness of mind, body and spirit, is manifested in the daily operations of the White Oaks Resort and Spa, and in serving as the 1st Vice President of the St. Catharines General Hospital Foundation. This fundamental philosophy serves as the building blocks that he shares with his 500 team members.

The company's mission statement to "treat each guest as though the success of the business depends on that individual alone," is reflected in Wakil's personal vision to treat each team member the same way. With such dedication to these philosophies, it is no wonder that White Oaks was recently voted second on the list of Canada's top employers by the Report on Business Magazine.

Wakil graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a Bachelor of Arts degree, and was an original member of the Niagara College Foundation Board. His leisure time is spent with his wife Robyn, and their three children.

Brian Hutchings – June 12, 2 p.m.,

Brian Hutchings is the Commissioner of Community Services for the Niagara Region, a service that performs the responsibilities of administrator of the provincial Ontario Works program, Systems Manager for Homelessness and the Hostel system, Systems Manager for Children's Services, operates eight Homes for the Aged, and a range of programs under the Seniors Community Programs umbrella. Hutchings also performs a senior management role on the Corporation's Management Team.

A Niagara Region native, Hutchings graduated from Ridley College and earned a bachelor of commerce degree from Saint Mary's University in 1988. In 1996, Hutchings received his Certified General Accountant's designation, and in 1999, his Human Resources Diploma.

Community participation has played a significant role in Hutchings' life since he was a professional football player in the Canadian Football League. He sits on the Trillium Foundation Board and is a Chair of the Grants Review Committee, serves as the President of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, and is the Treasurer of the Alzheimer Society of the Niagara Region. Hutchings is the co-founder of the Foundation of Recourses for Teens, a youth resource and crisis centre in West Niagara, and he also supports youth athletics and is a member of the coaching staff for the Ridley College First Football team, as well as the President of the Lincoln Leaper Jump Rope Club.

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James F. Ryan – June 12, 7 pm.

James F. Ryan built a successful career in the oil and retail sectors, holding executive positions with several Canadian companies, including Shell Canada Ltd. and Petro-Canada, where he was responsible for distribution and marketing activities. He was also a founding partner of Pyne Management, a supplier of services to the downstream petroleum business.

In 1988, he joined Canadian Tire Corporation as President, Canadian Tire Petroleum, and built the company into the largest independent retailer of gasoline in Canada. He was later appointed Senior Vice-President of Dealer Relations for Canadian Tire Corporation, and was responsible for the selection, training, financing and on-going relationship between the Corporation and its Associate Dealers across Canada.

With degrees from the University of Western Ontario (BSc in computer science), and York University (MBA), Ryan is President of the Niagara Regional Broadband Network — the premier supplier of fibre optics services throughout the Niagara Region.

A resident of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ryan retired in 1999, but remains active in the community. He currently serves as Chair of the Niagara College Board of Governors, and a Director of the Niagara College Foundation, Chair of Niagara-on-the-Lake Hydro, Chair of Brantford Energy Inc., and Chair of the Centre for Advanced Visualization.