



Women Making a Difference Ontario North Fall Gathering

A full day of inspiration and fellowship with CFUW members

Gathering Agenda:

- Welcome
- Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell, Lakehead University Chancellor
- Tour of Orillia Museum of Art & History
- Lunch
- Inspiring Stories Panel Discussion:
 - Leslie Fournier: Community Innovator
 - Irena Lawrenson: Trailblazer
 - Sherry Lawson: Indigenous Storyteller
 - Moderator: Ruth Watt, CFUW Orillia
- Networking & Refreshments
- Wrap-Up

Questions? Contact cfuworillia@gmail.com

Saturday October 18, 2025

9 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**St. Paul's Centre,
62 Peter Street N., Orillia, ON
\$60 per person**

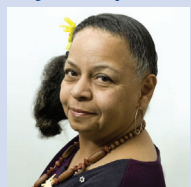


To register [click here](#),
use the QR code or copy
and paste this link into
your browser:

tinyurl.com/ONFallGathering

Registration deadline is Saturday
October 11th.

Keynote Speaker



Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell
Chancellor,
Lakehead
University

Lakehead University Chancellor Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell, CM, Ed.D. is a distinguished theatre artist, educator, independent television producer/director and co-founder of Vision TV. She currently serves as the 10th Chancellor of Lakehead University. A trailblazer in Canadian media, Dr. Deverell was among the first Black women to become a television host and network executive in Canada. In 2005, she was appointed to the Order of Canada for her pioneering work in journalism and her unwavering commitment to social justice. A mentor and role model, she will share the challenges, milestones and lessons from her remarkable career journey to leadership in education and the arts.

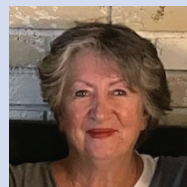
Panelist



Leslie Fournier
Community
Innovator

An entrepreneurial spirit and love of exploring led Leslie Fournier to create Streets Alive in Orillia's downtown core. This unique placemaking program brings public spaces to life with interactive art and activity. Leslie has been recognized as Citizen of the Year and Business Woman of the Year for the impact and success of these projects. As a small-town retailer for over 20 years, Leslie understands the challenges faced by local businesses and the increasing importance for every community to create a strong, vibrant sense of place.

Panelist



Irena Lawrenson
Trailblazer

Irena Lawrenson joined the OPP in 1974, the first-year women were hired as uniformed officers. Over 30 years, she rose from Constable to Inspector, often the first woman in each role. Her work spanned computer services, victim support, domestic violence, employment equity and restorative justice. Since retiring in 2005 Irena has walked the 800 kms El Camino pilgrimage and marked her 65th birthday by becoming a yoga instructor. She now chairs Dying with Dignity Canada's Barrie chapter and serves on the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition board.

Panelist



Sherry Lawson
Indigenous
Storyteller

Sherry Lawson grew up on the Mnjikaning/Rama First Nation in the days "B.C." (Before Casino). Her career has spanned libraries, courtrooms, jails and Ontario's largest First Nation's casino. A speaker, trainer, manager, mentor and editor, she has earned numerous awards for community service and served on many non-profit boards. Sherry shares her deep knowledge of Anishinaabe culture and history with audiences across Canada. An author and public speaker, she proudly embraces her most important role—Grandmother (Nookomis). Her license plate says it best: STRYTLR.