

## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION DAY 2025

### Truth and Reconciliation; An Unfinished Promise

*Written by Sofie Ostertag*

On September 30th, Canada observes the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day. This day honors the children who never returned home from residential schools, and stands with the survivors, their families, and their communities who continue to carry the weight of that legacy. It is not just a day of remembrance, but also a call to action, because healing cannot happen once a year; it must be carried in our words, our choices, and our actions every day.

For over 100 years, residential schools operated as tools of forced assimilation, removing Indigenous children from their

families and communities, with the intention of removing language, culture, tradition, and identity. Many endured abuse, neglect, and profound loss. Thousands never came home. This truth cannot be ignored; it is part of Canada's history and its present.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was created to document these experiences and chart a path forward. In 2015, the TRC released its final report along with 94 Calls to Action, laying out a blueprint for governments, institutions, and citizens to address both the harms of the past and the inequities that persist today (Government of Canada, 2025).

Unfortunately, reconciliation in Canada remains an unfinished promise. Of the 94 Calls to Action, less than half have been completed. Many of the most urgent reforms remain stalled: protecting Indigenous languages, ensuring equitable healthcare and education, reforming child welfare, addressing over-incarceration, and respecting land and resource rights (The Assembly of First Nations, 2025). Each year that progress lags, survivors and communities are asked to carry the burden of waiting for justice that is long overdue.



*StFX, Truth and Reconciliation Commemoration, 2024*



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The TRC directly challenged the justice system to confront its failures: the over-incarceration of Indigenous peoples, systemic discrimination in policing and courts, and the lack of recognition for Indigenous legal traditions (Government of Canada, 2023). Laws like Bill 5, which enables the government to push through environmental projects like mining, highways, and industrial zones without consulting with Indigenous communities, shows how colonial patterns continue (Chiefs of Ontario, 2025).

Truth and Reconciliation Day is about responsibility.

The responsibility to acknowledge how colonial systems, including the law, cause harm, and the responsibility to transform those systems so they can serve justice rather than deny it. As treaty people, we need to uphold Indigenous rights, honor treaty obligations, and ensure Indigenous voices are at the center of decisions that shape their lands and futures.

Reconciliation is not someone else's task, nor tomorrow's work; it is ours, and it is now.

Every Child Matters.

*Sofie Ostertag is a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Applied Forensic Psychology here at St. Francis Xavier University. Originally from Waubashene, Ontario, Sofie draws strength from her Mohawk heritage and is deeply committed to Indigenous advocacy and representation. Sofie encourages readers to take time to reflect on the experiences and ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous communities and hopes her piece contributes to meaningful reflection and dialogue on the path toward reconciliation.*

## StFX Truth and Reconciliation Events

Ceremony and Ribbon Tying  
5:30 PM @ Joyce Auditorium, Mulroney Hall

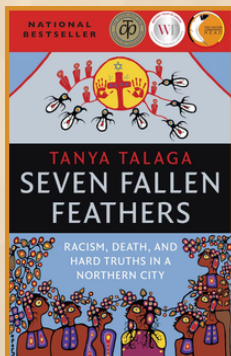
Alan Syliboy & The Thunder Makers  
7:00 PM @ Schwartz Auditorium

Indigenous Voices Book Display @ Angus L. Macdonald Library

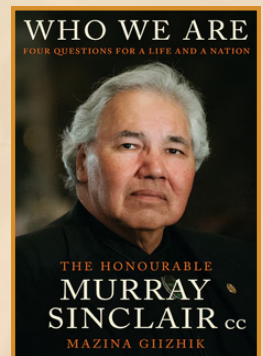
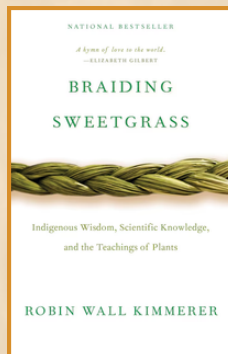


## Independent Reflection

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants  
*Robin Wall Kimmerer*



Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City  
*Tanya Talaga*



Who We Are: Four Questions For a Life and a Nation  
*Murray Sinclair*

# Notes

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The Assembly of First Nations. (2025, September). Progress on Realizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. <https://afn.bynder.com/m/21a223c344077b7/original/Progress-on-Realizing-the-Truth-and-Reconciliation-Commission-s-Calls-to-Action-September-2025.pdf>

Chiefs of Ontario. (2025, September 18). Protecting our lands: A first nations response to bill 5 & Bill C-5. <https://chiefs-of-ontario.org/resources/protecting-our-lands/>

Government of Canada, D. of J. (2023, January 20). Overrepresentation of indigenous people in the Canadian criminal justice system: Causes and responses. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/oip-cjs/p4.html>

Government of Canada. (2025, September 10). National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>