



FRIENDS OF
**EGERTON
RYERSON**

Dr. Rhonda McEwen
President and Vice-Chancellor, Victoria University

September 1, 2022

Dear Dr. McEwen

We congratulate you on your appointment as president of Victoria University and wish you well in taking on this challenge.

Unfortunately, however, we write now to apprise you of a grievous problem at Vic, one for which you undoubtedly have some information, but probably not about the serious errors made in addressing the “Egerton Ryerson” issue. Your predecessor, Dr. Robins, appointed a Research Panel that was ill qualified to take on the subject, did a shoddy job of it, and yet both he and the Board of Regents accepted its recommendations, without review. That is, that Egerton Ryerson no longer be mentioned “honorifically.” Then, as you know, his name was removed from the residence and from two scholarships named after him. Dr. Robins did, however, acknowledge that there was more information to be examined, in particular the Vardon letter.

We refer you to a recent article on the errors by Professor Ronald Stagg, “Update on the Ryerson Fiasco.” *Dorchester Review*. May 2022, which covers both the errors of the Ryerson Task Force and Victoria’s Research Panel. [Update on the Ryerson Fiasco – The Dorchester Review](#)

Many of the members of Friends of Egerton Ryerson are Vic alumni and are appalled at the unjust destruction of Ryerson’s reputation. He not only was the founding principal, but he acquired the charter for the college and raised funds for it. Contrary to the large degree of misinformation in circulation, he had nothing to do with the residential school system put in place after his death, but rather supported the voluntary, bilingual schools Indigenous leaders wanted. He lived with Ojibway people for a time, learned Ojibway, was named a “brother” by the Mississaugas of the Credit, and had two Ojibway boys named after him by their parents. He supported their land claims and desire for self-government, alas, unsuccessfully, for the accepted policy was assimilation. Nor did Ryerson support segregated schooling, as the Vic Panel stated (we could go on). See [didyouknow-2-pager-June-4.pdf \(friendsofegertonryerson.ca\)](#)

We, as others, have been greatly troubled by the revelations of the harm caused by the residential schools and believe we must go forward to reconciliation. However, reconciliation must be based on truth, and false accusations are a sorry distraction.

We would like to have a meeting with you to discuss how Vic can go forward, with honesty and honour, on this matter. Please direct correspondence to Lynn McDonald, lynnmcd@uoguelph.ca, or Ronald Stagg, rstag@ryerson.ca

Yours sincerely

Signed by multiple VIC graduates and former faculty