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Newest ULAA Alumni Honour Society inductees creating positive change

Art, education and social change highlight the issues being addressed by the University of Lethbridge Alumni Association's ([ULAA](#)) newest inductees into the Alumni Honour Society.

Ahkoiiinnimaki (Pipe Woman) Star Crop Eared Wolf (BFA - Native American Art '17), Desmond (Dez) Kamara (BA '10), April Matisz (BFA - Art '09) and Dr. Philip McRae (BEd '91) are all being recognized for their achievements.



2024 ALUMNI
HONOUR SOCIETY INDUCTEES

"I'm very pleased to introduce these four outstanding alumni, all of whom have and continue to make vital contributions to their communities," says Cyndi Bester (BMus '95, MEd '01), ULAA president. "Our alumni are using their ULethbridge experience to make a real difference in society, improving people's lives and serving as inspiration to today's students who can see themselves in the inspiring work they do."

Alumni Honour Society inductees will be honoured for their contributions to community at [Let There Be Light Night](#), a celebration of alumni achievement, on Friday, Oct. 18, 2024, at 7 p.m. in the Science Commons Atrium. Tickets are currently available [online](#).

Ahkoiiinnimaki (Pipe Woman) Star Crop Eared Wolf

A visionary artist and curator from the Kainai Nation, Ahkoiiinnimaki (Pipe Woman) Star Crop Eared Wolf has carved an inspiring path in the world of Indigenous art and cultural preservation. With a deep commitment to the Niitsitapi heritage, her multidisciplinary work — including painting, sculpture and photography — explores environmental and cultural themes deeply rooted in Blackfoot traditions. Achieving her Bachelor of Fine

Arts in Native American Art (Art History/Museum Studies) in 2017, Crop Eared Wolf's work has appeared in prominent galleries across North America. Her leadership extends beyond the gallery walls, with community-based initiatives and workshops, including Traditional Blackfoot Plants workshops across Treaty 7 territory. Currently the curator at The Confluence (Fort Calgary), Crop Eared Wolf is transforming the interpretive exhibits, bringing Indigenous perspectives to the forefront. Her journey is a testament to the power of art and education in fostering cultural understanding and connection.

Desmond (Dez) Kamara

Desmond (Dez) Kamara has turned his personal experiences into a powerful force for social change. His dedication to excellence was evident at the University of Lethbridge, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in anthropology. Born in Sierra Leone, Kamara survived 12 years of civil war and post-conflict. Focused on supporting war victims, especially former child soldiers, Kamara produced a documentary to raise awareness of their experiences. His career spans nearly a decade working with the United Nations, the Special Court for Sierra Leone and various international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in Sierra Leone, Canada and Jamaica. In 2023, Kamara returned to ULethbridge to launch his first book, reflecting his commitment to family values, education and his resilience to achieve his dreams. He recently completed a master's in social work at the University of Windsor, specializing in mental health and community development (policy + practice). Kamara exemplifies the values and spirit of ULethbridge, making him an exceptional representative and alumnus whose work continues to inspire globally.

April Matisz

April Matisz continually proves to be an exceedingly talented and dedicated artist. Her research interests are varied, as she explores the creatures and complex processes that make up the natural world, as well as the natural processes that have created us and continue to shape our lives. Matisz has established herself as a significant voice in contemporary Canadian art, connecting her education in both art and biology to engage in issues of motherhood and ecology. Through her artwork, Matisz captivates viewers with attention to detail in her creative brushwork and intricate paper collages that combine to demonstrate captivating stories of migration, evolution and survival. Matisz's recent solo exhibition at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery is evidence of her work making a larger impact across the province. She recently finished her MFA at Emily Carr University of Art and Design and is excited to begin teaching Drawing 1 at the University of Lethbridge in Winter 2025.

Dr. Philip McRae

Dr. Philip McRae is an esteemed thought leader and highly coveted speaker, recognized internationally for his influence on the educational landscape. His keynote addresses

and presentations at prestigious events worldwide have created spaces sharing insights and advancing dialogue on critical issues shaping the future of education. Dr. McRae's commitment to research and fostering positive change knows no boundaries. His impactful work in secondary and post-secondary institutions transcends borders and includes teaching experiences in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and in Alberta, with the Lethbridge Public School District and at Red Crow College with the Blood Tribe. He currently holds a pivotal role in the provincial educational system, balancing positions as the executive staff officer and associate coordinator of government research at the Alberta Teachers' Association and as an adjunct professor at the University of Alberta, where he earned his PhD.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/newest-alumni-honour-society-inductees-creating-positive-change>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.