



HUMANIST CANADA



October 2021

October is Women's History Month



Henrietta Muir Edwards
Nellie McClung



Louise McKinney
Emily Murphy



Irene Parlby

Greetings!

October 18th marks the day in 1929 when the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of "persons" was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal. This gave some women the right to be appointed to the Senate of Canada and paved the way for women's increased participation in public and political life. Though this decision did not include all women, such as Indigenous women and women of Asian heritage and descent, it did mark critical progress in the advancement of gender equality in Canada.

In Canada, the British North America Act (BNA Act) of 1867 set out the powers and responsibilities of the provinces and of the federal government. The Act used the word "persons" when referring to more than one person and "he" when referring to one person. Many argued the Act implicitly stated that only a man could be a person, which prevented women from participating fully in politics or affairs of state.

Governments also used the "persons" argument to keep women out of important positions. If the word "person" applied only to men, then the stipulation that only "qualified persons" could be appointed to the Senate of Canada meant that only men could be appointed.

In 1927, five women who have since become known as **the Famous Five** launched a legal challenge that would mark a turning point for equality rights in Canada. Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, and

Henrietta Muir Edwards were journalists, politicians, reformers, and activists from Alberta who asked the Supreme Court of Canada to answer the following question: does the word "person" in Section 24 of the BNA Act include female persons? After five weeks of debate, the Supreme Court decided that the word "person" did not include women.

Although shocked by the Court's decision, the Famous Five did not give up the fight and took their case to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of Great Britain in London, which was then Canada's highest court of appeal. On October 18, 1929, Lord Sankey, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, announced the decision:

"The exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who would ask why the word 'person' should include females, the obvious answer is, why should it not?"

On Persons Day, we honor the bravery and determination of the Famous Five whose landmark case helped pave the way for women to participate equally in all aspects of life in Canada. We also honor all those whose work in the years since then has expanded and strengthened those rights.

Enjoy this edition of News,
Jag Parmar,
Administrator

New Mailing Address!



We have a new mailing address!

**All future mail should now be mailed:
150 Elgin Street
Ottawa, ON K2P 1L4**

Member Profile of the Month



**Introducing our Member Profile
of the Month:
Ruth McGregor**

I came to Humanism through attending a wedding with a Humanist officiant; what a discovery that was for me! Not only did I find that there was a philosophy that reflected my mindset, but I was introduced to the concept of Humanist officiants as well!

For me, Humanism is such a positive, affirming philosophy, confident in our ability to solve problems, find meaning and live ethically without superstition or

belief in the supernatural. It isn't simply a rejection of religion but an alternative. I grew up in an Irish-Catholic environment, and often struggled with the church's teachings; I have found that living a life based on finding joy rather than escaping retribution has been far more satisfying.

Humanism has given a name to the values I've always held dear: reason, self-reliance and responsibility, ethics, inclusiveness, and integrity. Realizing that there was an entire belief system that shared my viewpoint has been enormously gratifying and pleasing.

If you'd like to share your story with us, please contact [Jag Parmar](#) so you can be the next Member Profile of the Month!

Humanist Chaplains: A Canadian Milestone



A Panel Discussion with Mary Beaty, Nicolas Bruzonne, Martin Frith, Srishti Hukku, Marty Shoemaker.

**Sunday, October 3
3 pm EST**

Make history with Humanist Canada and meet Canada's first accredited Chaplains! Canada currently has a significant gap in the delivery of secular care services to non-religious people.

Humanist Canada is committed to building a network of accredited secular advisors to provide support in a range of institutional settings (e.g. prisons, military, hospitals, universities, etc.) Join us for Part 1 of our new Humanist Canada Chaplaincy webinar series.

Our first webinar, *Humanist Chaplains: A Canadian Milestone*, focuses on the nature of chaplaincy, the roles of Humanist Chaplains currently working across the country, and on the launch of Humanist Canada's latest milestone – the Chaplain Accreditation Program. To learn more, [Click Here](#).

[Click Here to Register](#)

Virtual Coffee Chat



Afghanistan: A closer look at the tragedy.

Fika Taillon, born in Kabul, Afghanistan is a published poet, public speaker, educator, activist, and has a background in political science.

Afghanistan is economically, one of the poorest, and culturally, one of the

richest countries in the world. It is the land of world-known philosophers, scientists, and poets. Home to Bu Ali Sina, and Mawlana Jalalodin Balkhi, known as Rumi.

Afghanistan's history has often been one filled with unease! The small land-locked country has always been a great attraction to its neighbors. In recent history, it has also dealt with England, Russia, and the US.

What unfolded in Afghanistan at the end of August 2021 put the world in a state of disbelief and shock. For those of us from Afghanistan, the pain is indescribable!

Please join us for a session about Afghanistan. Bring your thoughts, emotions, concerns!

Date and time: Sunday, Oct. 17 at 2 pm ET.

[Click Here to Join the Chat](#)

Call for Submissions



Special Issue on the theme, "Apostasy and other forms of leaving religion".

Religions is an international, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, open-access journal on religions and theology, published monthly online by [MDPI](#).

Religions is creating a Special Issue on the theme: "Apostasy and Other Forms of Leaving Religion". Manuscripts should be submitted online at [mdpi.com](#) by **January 31st, 2022**.

For any inquiry, please contact the Special Issue Editor, Julia Martínez-Ariño at j.martinez.arino@rug.nl

[Read more about the Call for Papers](#)

Visit Our Web Store



Here is What's New On Our Web Store!

Don't forget to visit our online store! We're a small shop right now, but we have big plans! Check-in regularly to find new HC logo items like our masks, mugs, and pins. We also have a number of books, written by our HC family of authors.

If you have any ideas about what we should offer, send them our way!

[Visit our online store](#)

September Polling Results: Snap Election!

Should the Federal Government be having this election?

Here is how you responded to our poll:

18.7% of you said "YES".

81.3% of you said "NO".

Poll For This Month

Spyware Vulnerabilities Found in Apple Products

Apple issued emergency software updates for a critical vulnerability in its products this month after security researchers uncovered a flaw that allows highly invasive spyware to infect anyone's iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, or Mac computer without so much as a click. (The New York Times, Sept. 14, 2021)

How safe do you feel with all this fast-evolving technology?

Safe

Select

Not Safe

Select



Tell us what you'd like to see in the Newsletter.

To ensure the newsletter is relevant we invite your response to a few short questions. Having feedback from across the country is our goal. [Click here!](#)

Why membership in Humanist Canada is important!

We simply can't do it without you. We are entirely funded through memberships and donations. Your involvement is incredibly significant and goes a long way to support lasting change for a better society and a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail.

Humanist Canada has just launched a new member system that will allow you to update your own information. Click on the button below, and you will be prompted to set up your login information.

Already a member

Join Humanist Canada

If you have any questions about renewing, please contact the National Office at members@humanistcanada.ca or 1-877-486-2671.