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Who is Ontario's Best Lecturer?

Leading lecturers prepare to defend their schools' honour during the final stretch of TVO's 2009 *Big Ideas* Best Lecturer Competition

Toronto, February 3, 2009 – After weeks of deliberation and hours spent assessing some of the most inspiring and compelling lectures, the judges have announced the Top 10 competitors who will vie for the title of TVO's *Big Ideas* Best Lecturer this year. With a list that consists of a diverse group of experts from a wide variety of academic disciplines including English, anthropology, history, health sciences and communication arts, the race to determine who will be Ontario's next Best Lecturer will definitely be one to watch.

TVO's *Big Ideas* Best Lecturer Competition is sponsored by TD Insurance Meloche Monnex.

All these contenders have distinguished themselves for their ability to present ideas with confidence and authority, clarity and coherence, and energy and enthusiasm. They are also prepared to use this opportunity to boost their schools with a sense of pride and a full year's worth of bragging rights. Over the course of the next few months, students and alumni will have the opportunity to support and vote for their school and their favourite professor as each delivers a complete lecture on TVO's *Big Ideas*.

Educational institutions now preparing to battle it out for the top honour include the University of Toronto, with four lecturers in the Top 10, followed by Carleton University (with two competitors) and strong contenders from North Bay's Canadore College, the University of Western Ontario, Brock University and York University. The finalists were chosen by a panel of independent judges: documentary producer and author Suanne Kelman; broadcaster, researcher and internet evangelist Jesse Hirsh; and literary journalist and author Donna Bailey Nurse. The panel reviewed video submissions of lectures after over 160 nominated lecturers were shortlisted in December 2008.

"More than ever, today's professors are challenged to engage and incite a passion for knowledge within their students," says *Big Ideas* producer Wodek Szemberg. "Each of this year's 10 finalists truly embodies intellectual passion in action. Whether it's a lecture on literature, biology, sociology or the dramatic arts, viewers will have the opportunity to experience the best that higher education in Ontario has to offer, and then cast their vote for their favourite. Think of it as a five-week course without any registration or exams."

Big Ideas is TVO's popular televised lecture series, offering lectures on a variety of thought-provoking topics that range across politics, culture, economics, art, history and science. The 10 finalists will deliver their lectures on *Big Ideas*, airing Saturdays and Sundays between 4 and 5 pm EST beginning February 28 2009. Following each lecture and until April 5 2009, it will be in the hands of the viewers to grade their favourite professors (online at tvo.org, through a mobile device by texting the word "**vote**" to mobile short code 333111, or by phone to 1.866.281.3536) and ultimately decide who will earn the title of Ontario's 2009 Best Lecturer.

To spur some friendly competition between campuses, TVO has upped the ante, offering not only much deserved recognition and bragging rights to the winner, but also a \$10,000 TD Insurance Meloche Monnex scholarship to the winning school. As an added incentive to

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support one's school, a contest open to online voters will award one lucky viewer a 50" plasma HDTV and DVD home theatre system valued at \$5000, courtesy of sponsor TD Insurance Meloche Monnex.

"We have thousands of student and faculty clients, so supporting TVO's Best Lecturer Competition for the fourth year makes us immensely proud," said Paul Douglas, Vice President, TD Insurance Meloche Monnex. "Lecturers can inspire students and create a truly memorable learning experience. As a dedicated supporter of college and university alumni, we're thrilled to help bring attention to such a talented and compelling group of lecturers."

Created to recognize the best and brightest lecturers at Ontario's colleges and universities, the Best Lecturer Competition invites Ontarians to pay tribute to professors whose love of learning has helped to stimulate imaginations, open eyes and push boundaries in institutions of higher learning across the province. Now in its fourth year, the Best Lecturer Competition sponsored by TD Insurance Meloche Monnex galvanizes the post-secondary community and plays an important role in raising awareness about the province's great educators.

A complete list of finalists and broadcast schedule of lectures follows. For more information, including contestant bios, video clips of lectures, student quotes and full contest details, visit tvo.org/bestlecturer.

Show 1 – Saturday February 28

Matthew J. Bellamy, Department of History, Carleton University, on "A Watershed Moment: Canada and the Second World War"

Show 2 – Sunday March 1

Anton Lawrence Allahar, Department of Sociology, University of Western Ontario, on "Why is the whole world not developed?"

Show 3 – Saturday March 7

James Allard, Department of English Language and Literature, Brock University on "*Frankenstein*, Five Ways"

Show 4 – Sunday March 8

Doug Richards, Faculty of Physical Education and Health, University of Toronto (St. George Campus) on "Stretching: The Truth"

Show 5 – Saturday March 14

Paul Stevens, Department of English, University of Toronto (St. George Campus) on "Milton's Satan"

Show 6 – Sunday March 15

Shawn Lehman, Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto (St. George Campus) on "Primate Infanticide: Adaptation or Social Pathology?"

Show 7 – Saturday March 21

Darryl Davies, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, on "Explaining Crime"

Show 8 – Sunday March 22

Clare Hasenkampf, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Toronto (Scarborough Campus) on "Chromosomes Dividing – How It's Done and Why It Matters"

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Show 9 – Saturday March 28

Rod Carley, Communication Arts, Canadore College on “Adapting Shakespeare within a Modern Canadian Context”

Show 10 – Sunday March 29

Merv Mosher, School of Kinesiology and Health Science, York University on “Statistics: What’s the Point?”

Saturday April 4 & Sunday April 5

Excerpts from all 10 lectures

Saturday April 11, repeated Sunday April 12

TVO’s 2009 *Big Ideas* Best Lecturer is announced.

About TVO

TVO is Ontario’s public educational media organization and a trusted source of interactive educational content that informs, inspires, and stimulates curiosity and thought. TVO’s vision is to empower people to be engaged citizens of Ontario through educational media.

About TD Insurance Meloche Monnex

TD Insurance Meloche Monnex, the group insurance brand of TD Insurance, works with over 900 professional, alumni and employer groups across the country to provide home and auto insurance programs. In business for 60 years, more than 600,000 clients trust TD Insurance Meloche Monnex with their insurance needs. TD Insurance, through its TD Insurance Meloche Monnex and TD Insurance Home and Auto brands, is the largest direct-response insurance group in Canada. For more information on professional and alumni group programs visit www.melochemonnex.com; for information on employer group programs visit www.group.tdinsurance.com.

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