



Dominion Institute Hosts Creative Writing Workshop Series in High Schools in Five Cree Communities in Northern Ontario

Toronto – February 26, 2009 – The Dominion Institute has successfully completed a unique series of creative writing workshops in high schools across five Cree communities in Northern Ontario. The initiative allowed Ojibwe playwright Drew Hayden Taylor and Cree author Edmund Metatawabin to share their experience as Aboriginal writers with over 320 students in the communities of Moosonee, Moose Factory, Fort Albany, Attawapiskat and Kashechewan.

Over four days, the two authors travelled over the winter roads to each community to talk to local high school students about their experience as Aboriginal story-tellers. Taylor and Metatawabin engaged in a dialogue with students and answered their questions about creative writing.

“Story-telling is at the heart of Aboriginal culture. I hope that these young students realize that they can be part of the next generation of great story-tellers. Their stories are important and deserve to be shared,” said Drew Hayden Taylor.

“In encouraging youth to pursue a career as writers, I always tell them that the first part of any project is the hardest. After the first sentence, the rest flows”, said Edmund Metatawabin. “I hope that we have encouraged many young people to write their first sentence and story.”

The workshop series was organized as part of the Dominion Institute’s fifth annual Canadian Aboriginal Writing Challenge. This short story contest encourages First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth (ages 14-18 and 19-29) to choose a moment in Aboriginal history and explore it through creative writing. Winners are chosen by a jury of Aboriginal authors and leaders, including Joseph Boyden, Tomson Highway and Drew Hayden Taylor.

“Over the five years of the Canadian Aboriginal Writing Challenge, the Dominion Institute has consistently tried to reach out to more and more young people, especially in remote communities. We have offered a truly unique experience to hundreds of students and hopefully sparked their interest in creative writing,” said Marc Chalifoux, the Institute’s Executive Director.

The Creative Writing Workshop Series was made possible through the support of De Beers Canada Inc. and CreeWest. The Dominion Institute is grateful for the continued support of lead sponsor Enbridge Inc. for its contribution to the *Canadian Aboriginal Writing Challenge*. The Challenge also benefits from the support of TD Bank Financial Group, De Beers Canada Inc., Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Canada Council for the Arts, and *The Beaver: Canada’s History Magazine*.

The Dominion Institute is a national charitable organization dedicated to creating active and informed citizens through greater knowledge and appreciation of the Canadian story.

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