June 1, 2022

The Royal BC Museum and Sisters of Saint Ann announce Letter of Agreement regarding transfer of records

VICTORIA, BC — The Royal BC Museum and the Sisters of Saint Ann today announced the signing of a Letter of Agreement that will provide the Royal BC Museum and Archives with full responsibility for the Sisters of Saint Ann archives, as well as expedite the transfer and digitization of the Sisters' records at the Royal BC Museum.

"Transparent access to comprehensive residential school records is essential to truth and reconciliation efforts", says Alicia Dubois, CEO of the Royal BC Museum. "The expedited transfer and digitization of records held in the Sisters of Saint Ann archives is a positive step forward in this collective pursuit for justice."

The Sisters of Saint Ann provided all records related to Indian Residential Schools to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2012 and these records were then transferred to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). Since June 2021, the Sisters of Saint Ann have worked with the Royal BC Museum to provide access to the Sisters' archives and this new agreement is an important milestone toward the transfer of ownership of the Sisters' archives to the Royal BC Museum.

"We recognize access to archives is just a single step towards reconciliation and that reconciliation begins with truth. Our hope is that the archive transfer and digitization will contribute towards a greater understanding of what took place in the residential school system, and of the harm and trauma students experienced," says Sister Marie Zarowny, President and Board Chair of The Sisters of St. Ann. "It is our belief that this transparent search for truth will lead the way towards restorative healing."

Through this agreement, the Sisters of Saint Ann will fully fund an archivist at the Royal BC Museum to aid in the transparent management of the archives. Archivists at the Royal BC Museum are highly experienced in navigating the provincial and federal privacy laws that govern access to the records, and with this agreement will be responsible for facilitating ongoing access to the records by residential school survivors, their families and Indigenous communities.

The Sisters of Saint Ann and the Royal BC Museum are committed to working together in the spirit of and according to the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the United Nations Joinet-Orentlicher Principles and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act throughout the process of record transfer.

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About the Sisters of St. Ann: The Sisters of St. Ann were founded in 1850 by Blessed Marie Anne Blondin in Vaudreuil, Quebec and have served in the Pacific Northwest since 1858. After their arrival, the Sisters staffed over 30 schools and opened 10 hospitals throughout BC, the Yukon and Alaska. Their history parallels that of British Columbia, which is what led to the deposit and planned transfer of their archives to the BC Archives at the Royal BC Museum.

About the Royal BC Museum: The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The BC Archives is part of the Royal BC Museum; acquiring, preserving and making publicly accessible the documentary heritage of the province. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of British Columbia in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), the museum and archives collectively are a hub of community connections in BC – onsite, online and around the province.

If you are looking to access records from the Sisters of Saint Ann, please contact the Royal BC Museum at access@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

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