



Lewis Debassige From Trudeau to Trudeau

Public Lecture

FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 23, 2018

1-3 pm

Natalie Zemon Davis
Conference Room

#2098
Sidney Smith Hall
100 St. George St.

The University of Toronto

From Trudeau to Trudeau: Government
Policy Towards Indigenous Peoples from
the 1969 White Paper to the
2018 Proposed “New Legal Framework”

Lewis Debassige is a respected Anishinaabe Elder from M’Chigeeng First Nation on Manitoulin Island (Mnidoo Mnising). He is well known for his work as an activist and political advocate for Indigenous rights and education. As a member of the Union of Ontario Indians and the National Indian Brotherhood in the 1960s and 70s, Lewis took part in the rise of Indigenous political organizing and activism and was involved in the development of the influential 1970 “Citizens Plus” or “Red Paper” response to the federal government’s infamous 1969 White Paper proposal to eliminate Indian status and assimilate Indigenous peoples into ‘mainstream’ society.

Mr. Debassige is also a co-author of the 1972 policy paper, “Indian Control of Indian Education,” which played a foundational role in the development of Indigenous education policy in Canada. Lewis’ advocacy work extends to his home community on Manitoulin Island where he has served as a teacher, education administrator, and as one of the founding directors of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation. Today, he continues to actively promote ongoing initiatives in language and cultural revitalization and educational programming in M’Chigeeng.