



May 12, 2010

Board of Governors
Nipissing University
100 College Drive
North Bay, ON P1B 8L7

Dear Members of the Nipissing University Board of Governors:

Re: Library Naming and Honorary Degree for Former Ontario Premier, Mike Harris

I am writing to you on behalf of the 155,000 teachers who are employed in the publicly-funded schools of Ontario, and in particular on behalf of the many teachers who actively serve as associate teachers with Nipissing University's Schulich School of Education.

As you are aware, since March of this year, rumours have surfaced that Nipissing University intends to name the new learning library that will open in September 2010 after former Ontario Premier, Mike Harris. We have also recently heard that the university intends to confer an honorary degree on Mr. Harris. The Executive of the Ontario Teachers' Federation would like you to know that both we and our members object, in the strongest possible terms, to any intent Nipissing may have to pursue such a misguided plan of action. We find it incongruous that a university that prides itself on being a school for future teachers and for aboriginal students would deem it appropriate to confer any honour on an individual who decimated the funding of k – 12 and post-secondary education in Ontario, and who closed schools and libraries in countless locations across the province. During his time in office, Mr. Harris also slashed assistance to the poorest people in our province, including school children, and operated with brutal disregard for the safety and security of Ontario's citizens.

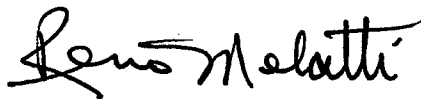
As noted above, many of our members have long operated as essential partners in the preparation of new teachers at your institution by serving as associate teachers for Nipissing's teacher candidates. This partnership has become even more essential to the health of your Bachelor of Education programs in recent years, as the new Schulich School of Education now operates on two campuses (North Bay and Brantford), and today prepares almost one-third more teachers than it did previously. Our organization is proud to have a positive relationship with Dean Sharon Rich and Education faculty members, which we value. That said, given the insidious treatment of the profession by former Premier Mike Harris, and his total lack of respect for its members, we cannot predict how teachers may demonstrate their displeasure, should the university choose to name the new library after, or confer an honorary degree on,

Suite 200, 1300 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4T 1X3 Canada
416.966.3424 • 1.800.268.7061 • FAX 416.966.5450
www.otffeo.on.ca

Mr. Harris. Many of our members are also graduates, and hence alumni, of Nipissing University. We are certain that their upset over such action by the university would be evident in equally concrete terms.

We would appreciate receiving a response from you to our concerns. We hope to hear that the rumours regarding the library naming and honorary degree granting are unfounded.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Reno Melatti".

Reno Melatti
President

RM/LA/mc

Copy: Dean Sharon Rich, Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University
Erin Robertson, Chair, OTF Teacher Education Liaison Committee, Nipissing University