



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques

Press Release

Dr. James L. Turk to be awarded the CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Award for his commitment to intellectual freedom and its advocacy in Canada.

TORONTO, January 25, 2024 -- The Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération Canadienne des Associations de Bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) is pleased to recognize Dr. James L. Turk with the inaugural CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Award. Dr. Turk has been an enthusiastic advocate for the rights of individuals to think, express themselves, and access information without fear of persecution or censorship.

As the Director of the Centre for Free Expression at the Toronto Metropolitan University, Dr. Turk has been at the forefront of the fight for intellectual freedom and Charter rights since its inception in 2015. A public intellectual who has recognized and endorsed the leading role that libraries play defending and promoting intellectual freedom, Dr. Turk is a true champion of libraries in their role protecting intellectual freedom for all Canadians.

Dr. Turk has made myriad concrete contributions to discussions regarding Intellectual freedom as an essential role for libraries, including:

- Leading the development and launch of the [Library Challenges Database](#) consisting of challenges faced by libraries across the country, and including the supporting resources and decisions made regarding those challenges.
- Leading the development and launch of the [Library Policies Database](#), a free, fully searchable database of Canadian public library policies related to the topic of Intellectual Freedom.
- Responding to and supporting multiple librarians and public library boards of trustees in various parts of the country who turned directly to Dr. Turk as Chair of the CFE's Working Group on Intellectual Freedom for wise counsel and support.
- Encouraging critical commentaries, such as [When a Book by an Eminent Indigenous Author Is Pulled from a School Library, Something is Wrong](#) published on May 4, 2022.

- Leading the CFE collaboration with Edmonton Public Library to develop an online course on intellectual freedom for library staff which is made available to public library staff across the nation on a regular basis.
- Providing in-person and online training for multiple library staff and library board trustees on intellectual freedom and the legal framework in Canada.
- Facilitating online public education sessions and commentaries on topics ranging from censorship and freedom of the press, freedom of expression and the charter to regulation of online speech, reaching audiences in Canada and internationally; and
- Facilitating the 2022 negotiations with CFLA-FCAB's Intellectual Freedom Committee to join forces on a single nation-wide library challenge database.

About the Award Presentation:

CFLA-FCAB's Intellectual Freedom Committee will present Dr. Turk with his award at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference at the closing keynote, 3:55 pm, Friday January 26th, 2024 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, room MTCC 105/106.

About the CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Award:

The 2023 CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Award is the successor to the Canadian Library Association's Advancement of Intellectual Freedom Award which was awarded annually between 1988 and 2016. It recognizes outstanding contributions to intellectual freedom in Canada.