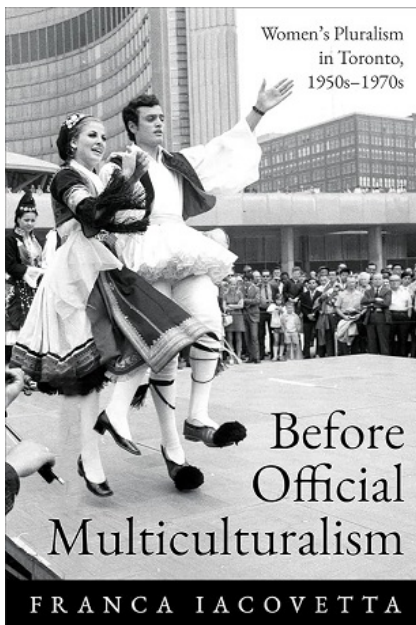


# OHS Joseph Brant Award Winner: *Before Official Multiculturalism: Women's Pluralism in Toronto, 1950s-1970s*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The OHS is pleased to present the Joseph Brant Award for multicultural history to Dr. Franca Iacovetta's *Before Official Multiculturalism: Women's Pluralism in Toronto, 1950s-1970s*. The book traces the history of the International Institute of Metropolitan Toronto, founded in 1956 and led by women social workers and volunteers. The history it recounts is focused on local experience with an eye to the larger context that gave the Toronto International Institute its meaning and its field of influence. *Before Official Multiculturalism* thus uses a meticulously researched case study to reframe the history of Canadian multiculturalism. The book is sophisticated in its centering of women's social, cultural, and political activism in the broader history of ideas about pluralism and reform stretching back to the Progressive era, while offering a clear-eyed critique of the ideological underpinnings of the Toronto International Institute and the movements from which it emerged. As the author notes in the introduction, the book examines "the fundamental tensions within liberalism...between democratic ideals and hierarchies of influence and power", focusing not only on organizational history, but on the gendered, racialized, and class-based interactions among Institute professionals and volunteers and the immigrant communities with whom they worked. In addition to providing a nuanced feminist reading of women's political consciousness as refracted through the lens of the emerging discourse of multiculturalism, the author has written a vibrant account of the period grounded in impeccable archival research, and makes a compelling case for the contemporary relevance of the study.

The OHS Honours and Awards Committee congratulates Franca Iacovetta.



*The OHS Joseph Brant Award presented at the Honours and Awards Ceremony on November 2, 2024 at the Historic John McKenzie House in Willowdale, Toronto, Ontario. Pictured are: Award Winner Dr. Franca Iacovetta (L) and Co-Chair of OHS Honours & Awards Committee Hans Bathija (R). Click the image to watch a video of the award acceptance.*



Founded in 1888, the Ontario Historical Society is a non-profit corporation and registered charity dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Ontario's history for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. To learn more about the OHS's Honours and Awards Program, or to submit a nomination, please visit <https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/honours-awards/> or contact the Society's offices by telephone or e-mail.

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