



Indigenous Teachings Guiding You Through Brockville Campus

St. Lawrence College Brockville campus is located on traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples who continue to call these lands their home. As you navigate campus you will see directional wayfinding that incorporates elements from their practices and teachings.

THE TREE OF PEACE

The Great Law of Peace, also known as the Kaianerekowa (guy-yaw-ne-let-go-wa), was created by Haudenosaunee people and is one of the earliest examples of a formal democratic governance structure. The Tree of Peace symbolizes the alliance of five nations and the binding force among the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca with the Tuscarora Nation joining later, making it six nations, known today as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

The Tree of Peace also symbolizes unity, peace, strength, diplomacy, governance, cultural identity, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship and reminds us that all individuals within a community belong, are valued, and their well-being and growth are prioritized. The Haudenosaunee symbolizes these principles and others through the imagery of the great white pine tree often referred to as the Tree of Peace, or the Great Tree of Peace.

THE THREE CLANS OF THE MOHAWK

Indigenous communities organized socially and politically by clan systems to support and protect kinship, identity, and the overall health and well-being of their nation. While First Nations, Inuit, and Métis each have a unique identity, culture, history, and clan system, we are connected in ways that transcend political, territorial, and temporal barriers.

Each nation has specific clans represented by animals, birds, or fish, or a specific number, meaning, or responsibilities that are distinct to their nation. Some nations have as few as four clans and some as many as nine. Traditionally, both Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe people organized their clan systems in matrilineal family groupings, meaning your clan and Nation identity comes from your mother. Today, Mohawks and Anishinaabe continue to recognize the clans they belong to and strive to maintain the integrity of their clan systems.

“To unify the original five Haudenosaunee Nations (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk) a family clanship system was established based on common female ancestry to support the social and political foundations of the **Great Law of Peace -Kaianerekowa**. This social order gives the identification with nature and provides family ties that transcend political divisions. The clan animals of the Bear, Wolf, Turtle, Beaver, Deer, Hawk, Heron, Snipe, and Eel are symbols of extended family identity and unity, and as such are often repeated in contemporary Haudenosaunee artwork.”

- Rick Hill, Tuscarora.

The clan system is extremely important as it is the structure that supports the social and political identity of the Haudenosaunee people, with laws that govern Haudenosaunee identity, marriage, hereditary leadership, and duties of clans in birth, death, ceremony, and decision-making. The clan system continues today with great vibrancy and revitalization efforts.

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Ma'iingan (my - in' - gun) | Okwáho (Oh-GWA-ho) | Wolf

For the Haudenosaunee, the wolf represents one of three principal clans. The Wolf clan carries three of the nine hereditary titles of the Kanien'keha:ka (People of the Flint). Each title represents the Wolf clan family in his nation, and the leader shall carry the title name for life. For those who identify as Wolf clan, they may refer to themselves and their family as Wakathahion:ni (wah-ga-tah-HOON-knee), which loosely translates to: "the path makers or the ones who go ahead and make the path."



Miskwaadesi (mis-kwa - day' - see) | A'nó:wara (ah-NO-wah-la) | Turtle

For the Haudenosaunee, the turtle represents one of three principal clans. The Turtle clan carries three of the nine hereditary titles of the Kanien'keha:ka (People of the Flint). Each title represents the Turtle clan family in his nation, and the leader shall carry the title name for life. For those who identify as Turtle clan, they may refer to themselves and their family as Wakeniahten (wah-gen-YA-dew), which loosely translates to: "they are the earth and/or the environment."



Makwa (mah' - kwa) | Ohkwá:ri (Oh-GWAH-lee) | Bear

For the Haudenosaunee, the Bear represents one of three principal clans. The Bear clan carries three of the nine hereditary titles of the Kanien'keha:ka (People of the Flint). Each title represents the Bear clan family in his nation, and the leader shall carry the title name for life. For those who identify as Bear clan, they may refer to themselves and their family as Wakhska:wake (walk-skah-lay-wah-geh), which loosely translates to: "they are looking for roots or medicine."