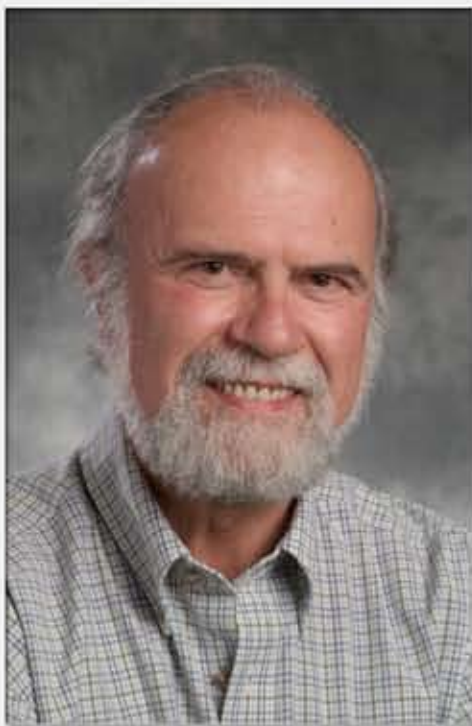




Western Centre for Research on Migration & Ethnic Relations



Dr. James Walker

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Dr. James Walker is Professor of History at the University of Waterloo, where he specializes in the history of human rights and race relations. In 2003-2004 he was the Bora Laskin National Fellow in Human Rights Research. His books include *The Black Loyalists* (2nd ed., University of Toronto Press, 1992), and 'Race', Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada (Osgoode Society and WLU Press, 1997), and he has published numerous articles and book chapters analyzing campaigns for human rights reform.

Southwestern Ontario and the "Rights Revolution": The Dresden Campaign

The province of Ontario is recognized as the pioneer of anti-discrimination and human rights legislation in Canada. Less well-known is the story of how these innovative instruments and institutions were brought onto the public agenda. Hugh Burnett and the National Unity Association (NUA) of Chatham, Dresden and North Buxton offer one vital insight into that process. Between 1948 and 1956 Burnett and the NUA waged a campaign for racial equality and social justice. Their efforts led to the passage of Ontario's Fair Employment Practices Act (1951) and Fair Accommodation Practices Act (1954), and laid the groundwork for subsequent human rights legislation in Ontario and across Canada. Traditional Anglo-Canadian rights, such as freedom of association and freedom of commerce, had historically been interpreted to permit discrimination on grounds of race, colour or creed in providing services to the public. The NUA inspired a recognition of freedom from discrimination as a fundamental principle, thus effecting a conceptual revolution that changed the course of Canadian law and Canadian history. Hugh Burnett and the NUA were early pioneers in the articulation of equality rights for all Canadians, now constitutionally inscribed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.



December 2, 2010

4:00 pm - Room SSC 5220

Refreshments 3:30 pm - Room SSC 5230

All welcome