Alanis Obomsawin
Honorary Degree Recipient
Spring Convocation, 2019

Alanis Obomsawin is an activist, filmmaker, and singer of Abenaki descent whose work focuses on First Nations and how government policies and everyday actions of English and French communities have an impact on Indigenous people. Her 50 documentary films mix archival material, official documents, and news footage with personal reflections, animation, traditional stories, and Indigenous legends. Her most celebrated work, , explored the Oka crisis of 1990 and won the Best Canadian Feature Film Award at the Toronto International Film Festival. Ms. Obomsawin is also an accomplished singer. Beginning in New York in 1960, her singing career took her to Canada, the United States, and Europe where she performed at universities, museums, prisons, and art centres in support of humanitarian causes.

Ms. Obomsawin has been active with organizations that support Indigenous communities and Indigenous women. Among other groups, she has served on boards and committees for the Native Womenôs Shelter of Montreal, Canada Councilôs First Peoples Advisory Board, Studio 1 ï the National Film Board of Canadaôs Aboriginal Studio, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and National Geographic International. She has received numerous awards including a Governor Generalôs Award in Visual and Media Arts and more than 30 international film awards. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada and a Grand Officer of the National Order of Quebec.