

BROCK UNIVERSITY

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cool Climate Oenology & Viticulture Institute, Brock University
905-688-5550 x4471

Brock's grape and wine research director is named the 2010 Grape King

Brock University is celebrating the selection of one of its top scientists as Ontario's 2010 Grape King.

Debbie (Murdza) Inglis, Director of Brock's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI), was named today as this year's winner, just as harvesting gets into high gear in grape-growing regions in the province.

Brock University President Jack Lightstone said it is no surprise that Inglis would be singled out for such distinction by her own peers.

"Students and academic colleagues at Brock have long known that Debbie is an excellent teacher and researcher," said Lightstone. "We are proud of how she has helped align Brock's outreach efforts more closely to the grape and wine industry's needs, and today we share in the celebration of this latest honour."

Ian Brindle, Vice-President of Research at Brock, also welcomed the news, saying the recognition "is testimony to her commitment to advancing the Canadian grape and wine industry as a Niagara farmer, as well as Director of CCOVI, Debbie has a unique and valuable perspective on Niagara's wine industry."

Each year, grape growers in Ontario nominate peers who demonstrate excellence in vineyard management. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the University of Guelph judge candidates' property and their innovative techniques. The winner is then appointed as the Grape King.

The honour means Inglis will become this year's grape and wine ambassador, which includes promoting the industry at two major events – the 2010 Niagara Grape & Wine Festival and the 2011 Spring Okanagan Wine Festival.

"I am thrilled to be the new Grape King," said Inglis. "I've been part of this industry from the time I was a young girl. It means the world to me and my family to accept this honour and act as an official ambassador to our world-class grape and wine industry."

Inglis has been involved in the grape and wine industry her whole life. She grew up in the Niagara Region in a family of grape growers and continues today the tradition of winegrowing.

She and her husband Rob own a 20-acre vineyard planted with Chardonnay, Riesling and Cabernet Franc. One of her brothers, Steve Murdza, is also co-owner of Coyote's Run Estate Winery located in the village of St. David's.

Inglis (PhD, McMaster University) joined the department of Biological Sciences at Brock University in 1999. As associate professor she teaches wine chemistry, wine microbiology and metabolic biochemistry in the oenology and viticulture program. She is instrumental in training the next generation of grape growers, winemakers and wine industry leaders.

Since 2008, Inglis has been the Director of CCOVI while remaining one of the core researchers for the institute.

Her main research focuses on yeast stress responses during Icewine fermentation and factors affecting Icewine quality. Working in conjunction with Gary Pickering, she has initiated a research strategy to improve wine quality as part of CCOVI's focus on premium wine production.

In addition, through her collaboration with colleague Wendy McFadden-Smith, they are working to understand the sour rot complex in Niagara vineyards to develop control strategies.

For more info: Nathalie Dreifelds, Marketing and Communications Officer, CCOVI, Brock University, 905-688-5550 x4471; ndreifelds@brocku.ca