

Enrich your life and  
the lives of others  
by becoming a  
Humanist Officiant



Would you like to officiate  
at weddings, baby namings,  
memorials, or other life events?

Humanist Canada will provide  
the training and certification  
you need for a rewarding  
career as a licensed  
Humanist Officiant.

Contact us to learn more:  
[info@humanistCanada.ca](mailto:info@humanistCanada.ca)

## FAMOUS HUMANISTS

**Ayaan Hirsi Ali** (1969): Somali human rights activist, writer, and politician.

**Alexander Graham Bell** (1847-1922): Scottish-Canadian scientist and inventor. Key invention: telephone.

**Sir Richard Branson** (1950): English entrepreneur, investor, and philanthropist. Knighted for his humanitarian efforts.



**June Callwood** (1924-2007): Canadian journalist, writer, author, and philanthropist. Founder of Casey House (Canada's first hospital for people with HIV/AIDS), Companion of the Order of Canada, and recipient of 2007 Humanist of the Year award (Humanist Association of Canada).

**Dr. Brock Chisholm** (1896-1971): Canadian physician. First Director of the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Sir Francis Crick** (1916-2004) & **Dr. James Watson** (1928): Scientists who co-discovered DNA. Nobel prize laureates.

**Albert Einstein** (1879-1955): German scientist. Originated Theory of Relativity. Nobel prize laureate.

**Sir Robert Geldof** (1954): Irish musician and philanthropist. Organized first concert, Band Aid, for world famine relief.

**Helen Keller** (1880-1968): American writer. First activist for the visually impaired and the hearing impaired.

**John Lennon** (1940-1980): English musician. Peace activist. Co-founded *The Beatles*.

**Dr. Henry Morgentaler** (1923): Polish-Canadian physician. Reproductive rights activist. Order of Canada recipient.

**Carl Sagan** (1934-1996): American astrophysicist, writer, author. Founder of the award-winning television series, *Cosmos*.

**Gloria Steinem** (1934): American journalist, writer, author. Women's rights activist. Coined the term "Ms".

**Neil deGrasse Tyson** (1958): African-American writer, author, astrophysicist, and animal rights activist. Host of the television series, *Cosmos* and the radio show, *StarTalk*.

The national voice  
of humanism  
since 1968

# Humanist Canada

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## WHAT IS HUMANISM?

Humanism is a philosophy based upon a profound respect for human dignity and the conviction that human beings are ultimately accountable to themselves and to society for their actions. It is a deity-free worldview that affirms our ability to lead ethical and meaningful lives without beliefs in the supernatural. Humanists are guided by reason and scientific inquiry, inspired by music and art, and motivated by ethics, compassion and fairness.

### THE HAPPY HUMAN

The *Happy Human* is an easily recognizable symbol in the form of an abstract person jumping for joy.

The original logo, featured on the left, was the winning design created by an English artist in 1965, for a logo design competition organized by the British Humanist Association (BHA) for its members.

Various forms of the *Happy Human* are used by Humanist groups all over the world.

### A BRIEF HISTORY of HUMANISM

Humanism has a long tradition of freethought and has inspired many scientists, artists, and musicians. The earliest written record of Humanist philosophy originated in ancient Greece thousands of years ago. This philosophy turned to human beings rather than gods to solve human problems.

The fundamentals of modern Humanism have their roots in 1952. During the first World Humanist Congress in Netherlands that year, the founders of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) drafted a resolution of universal Humanist principles known as "The Amsterdam Declaration."

At its 50th anniversary, IHEU members unanimously passed a second resolution known as "The Amsterdam Declaration 2002". This updated declaration was adopted unanimously by the IHEU General Assembly, and thus became the official defining statement of Humanism around the world.

## AMSTERDAM DECLARATION 2002

1. Humanism is ethical. It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.
2. Humanism is rational. It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that solutions to the world's problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention. Humanism advocates the application of the methods of science and free inquiry to the problems of human welfare. Humanists also believe that the application of science and technology must be tempered by human values. Science gives us the means but human values propose the ends.
3. Humanism supports democracy and human rights and aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.
4. Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility. Humanism ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society, and recognizes our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world. Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.
5. Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion. The world's major religions claim to be based on revelations fixed for all time, and many seek to impose their worldviews on humanity. Humanism recognises that reliable knowledge of the world and ourselves arises through a continuing process of observation, evaluation and revision.
6. Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination and recognises the transforming power of art. Humanism affirms the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.
7. Humanism is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times. Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.
8. Our primary task is to make human beings aware in the simplest terms of what Humanism can mean to them and what it commits them to. By utilising free inquiry, the power of science, and creative imagination, for the furtherance of peace and in the service of compassion, we have confidence that we have the means to solve the problems that confront us all. We call upon all who share this conviction to associate themselves with us in this endeavour.

## ABOUT HUMANIST CANADA

Humanist Canada is a national, not-for-profit charitable organization. Originally founded as a local Humanist group in Montreal in 1968, the organization has since grown to be the largest organization promoting Humanism and secularism in Canada.

In 1996, the Registrar General bestowed the organization with the authority to train and certify officiants to solemnize marriages. As of 2017, Humanist Canada has over 50 licensed Humanist Officiants across Ontario.

Humanist Canada's *Humanist of the Year* award has been received by prominent Canadians such as writer and journalist, June Callwood, founder of Casey House, the world's first hospice for people with HIV/AIDS, and bioethics professor, author, and critical-thinking advocate, Dr. Christopher diCarlo.

Humanist Canada is an associate member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

### Vision

A secular world where reason and compassion guide public policy.

### Mission

To encourage the separation of religion from public policy and to foster the development of reason, compassion and critical thinking for all people through secular education and community support.

### Values

To uphold honesty, reason, critical thinking, and cooperation in every facet of human interdependence.

To encourage the efforts of Humanists and Humanism-focused organizations in Canada.

To support initiatives and programs that advance Humanism and secularism.

To provide non-religious ceremonies for life events such as weddings, baby namings, anniversaries, and funerals, through our licensed Officiants.



*Happy Human symbol used by Humanist Canada*