

June 2009

Dear First-Year Student,

Welcome to Niagara University! During college, you'll have many opportunities to explore new ideas and engage in intellectual study. Reading is integral to many of these experiences; it is also essential for lifelong learning.

Niagara Reads, the university's summer reading program for first-year students, introduces you to our intellectual community by reading and discussing a common book. This summer we would like you to read ***When the Emperor Was Divine* by Julie Otsuka**. Many faculty, staff, and administrators on campus will also be reading this book.

When the Emperor Was Divine is a touching novel about the internment of American citizens of Japanese descent during World War II. Otsuka's story focuses on one family, poignantly humanizing an unfortunate chapter in American history. Reading about the experiences of the mother, the father, and their two children enables readers to understand the deep and painful effects of discrimination.

At CARE sessions in July, all first-year students receive a copy of *When the Emperor Was Divine* as a **gift from Niagara University**. If you're unable to attend CARE but live nearby, you may pick up your copy in Student Affairs, O'Shea Hall, 1st floor, Mondays through Thursdays from 8:30 AM-4:30 PM or Fridays from 8:30 AM-12:00 PM. If you don't live nearby, you may borrow the book from a public library to read during the summer and then get your copy when you come to campus in August.

You'll be discussing *When the Emperor Was Divine* in your "First-Year Niagara" class (NUS 102). **Be sure to finish reading it by August 31.** Your NUS 102 instructor will also ask you to write a two-page response to one of the [twelve questions](#) you'll receive with your book.

In conjunction with reading this book, we are pleased to announce that author Julie Otsuka will be speaking to the freshman class on Thursday, September 10 at 7:30 PM in the Gallagher Center. You are also encouraged to enter the Niagara Reads [contest](#). We will be awarding three \$125 prizes.

The university community is excited about this opportunity to join you in reading and discussing *When the Emperor Was Divine*. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharon Green

Chair, Niagara Reads

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