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WINTER 2026

Beyond the Hill

Canadian Association of Parliamentarians



Women in politics
Roy Cullen looks back
The CAFP AGM
Regional tour to
Thunder Bay
Italian Interlude

PM 40027604

Italy Study Tour

April 1 to 13, 2025



Corneliu and Cecilia Chisu.



Osvaldo Núñez and his wife, Zaida with the statue of the she wolf Lupa with Romulus and Roma, the brothers who founded Rome.



CAFP study tour delegation with Cinzao Dato, Gino Alaimo, and Giuseppe Cossigaat of the Italian Parliament.



Marquises Francesco Mazzei.



The Hon. Sue Barnes asks a question at a group session.



Dorothy Dobbie with the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell in her residence.



The Hon. Monica Baldi, Vice president of the European Parliament's Former Members' Association.

Beyond the Hill

Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians

Volume 20, Issue No. 2

Winter 2026

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The moving Terry Fox memorial in Thunder Bay.

Cover photo by Dorothy Dobbie.

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ISSN 1920-8561

Canadian Publications mail product
Sales agreement #40027604

Our Mission Statement

Beyond the Hill, a magazine for former parliamentarians, is designed to engage, enlighten and inform its readers about each other, their Association and its Educational Foundation. Its aim is to encourage participation in the Association and to promote democracy. The views of the contributors to this publication do not necessarily represent those of CAFP nor its Educational Foundation. *Beyond the Hill* welcomes letters to the editor, submissions and suggestions. P.O. Box 1, 131 Queen St., House of Commons Ottawa, ON, Canada, K1A 0A6. Telephone 1-888-567-4764, Fax: 613-947-1764 E-mail: ex-parl@parl.gc.ca. Website: www.exparl.ca.

Italy trip

Carissimi,

I hope this finds you well.

I express my heartfelt thanks for the wonderful welcome you gave me in Canada, during which we were also able to exchange interesting opinions on many topics.

First of all, I would like to thank President Matt DeCoursey for inviting me to attend the 38th Annual General Meeting, also on behalf of the European Parliament Former Members Association and in particular our President Klaus Hänsch. I would also like to express my gratitude to Vice President Jack Harris, who attended our Assembly in Brussels last month, and to former President Dorothy Dobbie, who has known our association for many years.

Let me extend special thanks for the warm hospitality to the President Emeritus Léo Duguay (also referring to his kind wife Charlotte) who, with me, led the distinguished members of the CAFP delegation visiting Italy last April.

I am pleased to mention the trip to Italy, organized in the framework of the cooperation between our associations, where the two delegations held meetings, conferences, events and seminars aimed at strengthening relations between the two sides of the Atlantic.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to everyone, but especially to the affable Sue Barnes, who showed me the beauty and power of nature in your Great Nation.

Congratulations on the organization of the various meetings, starting with the Memorial Service, which was a truly emotional ceremony, continuing with the receptions and the fireside discussion, "Enduring Relationships in a Shifting Geopolitical Reality". The analysis of the changing geopolitical landscape was very interesting, especially in the debates with former Canadian Minister Seamus O'Regan, President of the Association of Former Members of Congress Barbara Comstock and former U.S. Congresswoman Donna Edwards.

The Ottawa meeting was very fruitful, also taking into account the common objectives of promoting peace and the values that underpin democracy.

I am very pleased to have spoken with you about a possible generic collaboration agreement among our three associations (Canadian, European and U.S.) which will then be evaluated by our respective Boards of Directors. Congratulations again on the organization and excellent work of your Staff especially the talented Carolina Moore. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Monica Baldi

Vice-President of the European Parliament Former Members Association

Upcoming CAFP events

CAFP events provide our members with the opportunity to network and contribute to the conversations that shape Canadian democracy.

Study Tour 2026 to Tanzania

Thurs., April 9, 2026 – Sun. April 19, 2026 (exact dates are still to be confirmed). Optional Safari extension from April 19 - 25, 2026.

AGM & Memorial service

Sun., May 31, 2026: AGM Welcome reception
Mon., June 1, 2026: CAFP AGM, Memorial service

Study Tour 2026 to Iceland and Greenland

Tues., September 15, 2026 – Tues., October 15, 2026
Exact dates are to be confirmed.

**Regional Meeting in Nunavut
September 2026**

Exact dates are to be confirmed.

Holiday Reception

Monday, December 7, 2026



Matt DeCoursey.

Message from the President

By Matt DeCoursey

Dear friends and colleagues, Please accept my warmest wishes to you and yours for a happy and prosperous 2026.

As I write this message in early January, we are already busy at work planning for, and in some cases already engaged with, the myriad activities that will occupy our board and association this year.

Before looking ahead, I would like to look back at our Holiday Reception and Dinner held on Parliament Hill on December 1st. We were honoured to have the Right Honourable Joe Clark provide important remarks about the continuing role of Canada's former Parliamentarians in standing firm against the erosion of democratic principles where and when it happens. Thank you, Joe, and Maureen, for your continued support, engagement, and (importantly) paid membership in our association.

It was also nice to be joined at the reception by over a dozen current serving Members of Parliament and Senators. The relationship between current and former Parliamentarians is one that we are always keen to strengthen.

Their presence at our event was most appreciated and lays the groundwork for further exchanges and a better understanding of the important role that CAFP plays in post-Parliamentary life.

At the end of January, CAFP board directors will convene in Ottawa for a strategic planning exercise. Long overdue, this plan will ground the focus of our activities over the near and medium-term, always recognizing of our mandate to support and engage former Parliamentarians, and safeguard and promote the institutions of Parliament and Democracy in Canada and abroad. The strategic goals that flow from our meeting will also frame our engagement with the House of Commons Board of Internal Economy, as well as other sustainable funding pursuits that we undertake. I hope to share our plan in the spring once it is finalized. A special thanks to board member Sam Bulte who will lead our session, and all members who will attend or participate virtually.

Alongside our own activities, conversations continue to advance with our friends at the Former Member of

US Congress and the European Union Former Parliamentarians Association about opportunities to engage the collective expertise of our members in democratic education. I hope to have more to share in coming months.

I would also like to extend an early invitation to every former Parliamentarian to join us in Ottawa, May 31st and June 1st, 2026 for our Annual Memorial Service and General Meeting. I hope to see you there. Stay tuned for more information this spring.

Thanks as always to current board members for your dedication to our association. For those interested in standing for a board position, please contact our office at exparl@parl.gc.ca to express your interest. Our board will go through its annual refresh at our AGM on June 1st.

Finally, I'd like to share my thanks on behalf of us all to our team in the office. Annie Bourbonnais, Carolina Moore, and Hugo Laviolette, thank you for always going over and above for us all.

**Yours in continuing service,
Matt DeCoursey**

Become an active member of CAFP

We bring former parliamentarians together online, and in-person, when possible, to celebrate their accomplishments and service to Canada.

❖ **CAFP brings former parliamentarians together with:**

- An Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Ottawa
- A Regional Meeting each year (usually a provincial capital)
- Study Tour
- Receptions and other gatherings
- ZOOM Panel discussions

❖ **CAFP celebrates Former parliamentarians with two peer-selected honours:**

- The Distinguished Service Award, usually conferred at each AGM
- The Lifetime Achievement Award, conferred

at a gala dinner

Each year we organize a solemn Memorial Service to commemorate the services of our recently deceased.

❖ **We help former parliamentarians stay in touch, via:**

- Our website, www.exparl.ca
- Beyond the Hill, CAFP's full-colour magazine
- Database of former members, discretely managed and available to others on a confidential basis, by email at exparl@parl.gc.ca or by calling the CAFP office, toll free 1-888-567-4764 or 613-947-1690

❖ **We provide services to former parliamentarians, including:**

- Parliamentary access for spouses (for paid associate members only)

- A group auto and home insurance plan available through Cooperators; 1-800-387-1963. Mention that you are a CAFP member for preferred rates.

- An extensive travel insurance plan available through Johnson Insurance 1-866-606-3362. Mention that you are a CAFP member for preferred rates.

- Transition support and mentorship to Senators and MPs when they leave Parliament.

❖ **We arrange opportunities for our members to continue to serve the cause of democracy, by speaking in universities, participating in election observer missions, and other activities.**

There's life after Parliament. Please visit our website <https://exparl.ca> for more information or to renew your membership.

Thunder Bay Regional Meeting

By Dorothy Dobbie

We were excited to go to Thunder Bay at the invitation of Mayor Ken Boshcoff, former MP for Thunder Bay-Rainy River, to hold our regional meeting September 19 to 21, but I don't think anyone anticipated how much fun it would actually be,

We seldom go to smaller cities in this vast land of ours, but it is always rewarding and revealing of our true Canadian spirit when we do. Thunder Bay was no exception.

Most of you know the history of the two cities, Port Arthur and Fort William. Port Arthur was established in 1871 to be the temporary (1882-1885) eastern terminus of the CPR. It also served as a small port on Lake Superior for shipments to the USA side of the lake.

Nearby was old Fort William, which was established in 1803 to serve the fur trading needs of the Northwest company. The railway brought change and eventually the fort was abandoned and later, under the Hudson Bay Company, it was reconstructed at the location now known as Fort William Historical Park.

Situated on the banks of the lower Kaministiquia River, this location became the preferred location for the CP and in 1892, the area was incorporated as the town of Fort William.

So began the rivalry between the two cities that lasted until April 1970, when they amalgamated as Thunder Bay and became a major centre for what is widely known as "Northwestern Ontario", but is actually further south on the map than the city of Vancouver!

Today, the Thunder Bay Metropolitan Region is home to some 133,000 people and is home to Lakehead University and Confederation College. It is becoming a tourist destination, heavily frequented by Americans thanks to the dozen or so Viking Cruise ships that ply the lake and stop in Thunder Bay.

CAFP Tour

Our members were warmly welcomed at an evening reception, that included the Hon. Patty Hajdu, MP for



The delegation and our guides at Fort William.

Thunder Bay-Superior North, Minister of Jobs and Families and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, along with the Hon. Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay-Atikokan and Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products.

Later that evening, we were treated to an amazing drone lights show celebrating Thunder Bay put on by the Arts & Culture Under the Lights Festival.

The following day was a busy one with a trip down before-memory-lane to Fort William Historical Park. The visit was a fascinating look at how early Europeans lived here in Canada and how they learned from the local Indigenous communities.

Thunder Bay was where Terry Fox ended his heroic run across Canada and our visit to his monument raised tears from many as we listened to the story of his heroism. A visit to Kakabeka Falls, nicknamed the Niagara of the North by local residents, illustrated the power and the beauty of this part of the Northern Shield.

We ended the trip with a breakfast meeting of visitors and local members.

Here we had a chance to discuss the importance of continuing to provide opportunities such as this so more members can participate. We provided an update on the difficult task of getting Parliament to grant us an increase in our pitiful funding stipend, explaining that trips like this are always taken at the expense of individual members, who also share the expense of bringing along a staff member to help coordinate activities. (We do very much appreciate the hard work that Annie Bourbonnais expended for us. It is no picnic herding a bunch of Formers.)

We talked about the state of democracy worldwide and how Formers can participate by offering their experience and support of new members. Later, we went for a tour of the HMCS Margaret Brooke, a class II icebreaker that was docked at Thunder Bay on a recruitment mission.

Embracing us all throughout the journey was the friendliness and warmth of the local people who clearly hold their mayor in great esteem.

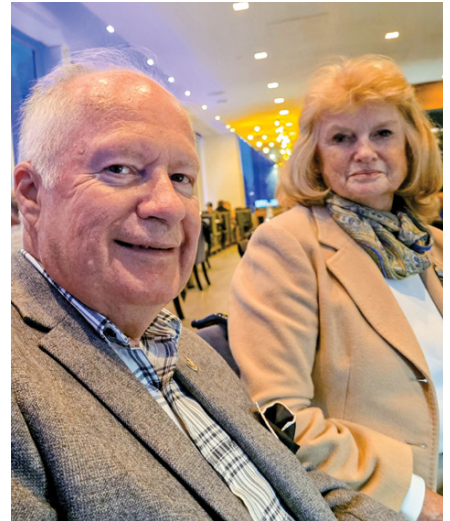
Thunder Bay may be a small town, but it is a very wonderful town, and we appreciated the opportunity to get to know it.



A special treat was offered by Robert-Falcon Ouellette and his family who drove down from Winnipeg.



Hon. Jean Augustine tours Fort William.



Hon. Bryon Wilfert and Elizabeth Wilfert.



Chungsen Leung stops to read the inscription at the Terry Fox Memorial.



The avenue leading to the Terry Fox memorial.



The light show over Thunder Bay.



HMCS Margaret Brooke of the Royal Canadian Navy.



From the upper deck of the Margaret Brooke.



The majestic Kakabeka Falls.

Europeans, and Italians in particular, are solidly behind Canada

By Léo Duguay

CAFP delegates have recently returned from a marvelous trip to Rome, Florence, and Siena. None of this would have been possible without the invaluable assistance of Monica Baldi, Vice President of the European Parliament Former Members Association.

Her extensive knowledge of Italy and her connections with government officials and hoteliers made our stay exceptionally pleasant. So pleasant, in fact, that many of us, having indulged in the finest cuisine and wines of Tuscany, are now adjusting our belts to accommodate a noticeable gain in *avoir du pois*. In Rome, we were treated to an analysis of global peace development by Dicastery Michael Czerny S.J., which contrasted with serious discussions with former members of the Italian Parliament concerning President Trump's unprecedented attack on Canadian sovereignty. An exchange with former members of the European Parliament and the Women 20 Italia delegation amplified the need for cooperation between our associations. Canadian delegates also had the opportunity to view an impressive collection of Caravaggio's works and were received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the *Circolo degli Esteri*.

The opportunity to meet with the Mayor of San Casciano led to an extraordinary four-course lunch featuring Tuscany's finest food and wine. A visit to Basilica of San Miniato al Monte was highlighted by a Gregorian chant led by Abbot Dom Bernardo, which was truly in-



Léo did a wonderful job of leading our delegation. He is shown here offering small gift to Abbot Dom Bernardo, who treated the delegation to a personal Gregorian chant.

spiring. Our stay at the Kraft Hotel was further enriched by a meeting with the Consular Corps of Florence. Our discussions focused on immigration matters and explored ways to enhance trade among countries while circumventing U.S. barriers. A visit to the private home of Michelangelo (Casa Buonarroti) revealed the remarkable history of this renowned artist. Of particular interest were his works created at the age of 15, showcasing his extraordinary talent as a child prodigy.

The most significant and serious part of our tour was a panel discussion at the Florence School of Transnational Governance (European University Institute). Delegates, including Peggy Nash and

Karen Redman, outlined the necessary changes to establish a new world order. Former Prime Minister Kim Campbell concluded by urging all of us to resist the narrow-minded worldview being imposed upon us by Donald Trump.

In Siena, a meeting with the mayor led to a serious discussion on Canada-Italy collaboration, focusing on fostering improved cultural relations and increased trade. Meeting in the Town Square (Piazza del Campo), where the Palio is held twice a year, etched in our minds the excitement of the annual horse race, which is comparable to the Kentucky Derby.

We were also treated to an enlightening discourse on the differences between Sangiovese grapes grown in Montepulciano versus those grown in Montalcino. Both were exceptional. A visit to the Mazzei winery, hosted by the patriarch Francesco

Mazzei the Marchese who is the 25th generation of a family winery established in 1435, sharpened our appreciation for fine wine. An exhibition of fine art painting with wine by the outstanding artist Elisabetta Rogai completed an excellent education on the complexity of fine wine and fine art. The most memorable aspect of our visit is the strong sense that Europeans, and Italians in particular, are solidly behind Canada in its current and temporary conflict with the Trump administration.

Léo Duguay was the Leader of the Canadian Delegation of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP) to Italy and President Emeritus of CAFP exparl@parl.gc.ca

Delegation of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians in Italy

By Monica Baldi, Vice president of the European Parliament's Former Members' Associationw

The FMA recently organised a special tour of Italy (April 1 to 13, 2025) within the framework of its partnership with the Association of Former Canadian Parliamentarians (CAFP).

The programme included many meetings, events, conferences and seminars in which the two delegations played an active role. While the Canadian party was headed by CAFP President Emeritus Léo Duguay, the FMA (European Dormer Members Association) group was led by Vice-President Monica Baldi.

The first stop on the tour was a hybrid event held on April 2 at the EPLO (The European Public Law Organization) in Rome, where the importance of transatlantic relations, especially in the light of recent American policy, was highlighted. Welcomed by Ilaria Garampi, the conference's participants included the prestigious 16-member Canadian party, the Women20 delegation (which was led by Elvira Marasco) and FMA members Giampaolo D'Andrea, Andrea Manzella, Gay Mitchell, Robert Moreland, Daniela Rondinelli and Margarita Starkeviciute.

The next day, the Canadians headed to the Italian Chamber of Deputies' prestigious Sala della Lupa for a special meeting with the Association of Former Parliamentarians of the Italian Republic (whose current president is Giuseppe Gargani).

As outlined in Cinzia Dato's detailed account, a number of veteran politicians were in attendance.

On April 7, the CAFP delegation was in Florence to take part in a high-level seminar (A Changed World: Fostering Resilience in the New Global Order²) organised by the European University Institute's (EUI) School of Transnational Governance, where it was hosted by Marco Del Panta and Fabrizio Tassinari (respectively the Secretary-General and Director of the EUI). The talks de-



Monica Baldi receives a gift of appreciation from President Emeritus Léo Duguay. Monica went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure the CAFP visit to Italy was very special.

livered by ex-EU Commissioner Danuta Hübner, former Spanish Government minister Arancha González, Gian Paolo Meneghini, Peggy Nash, Karen Redman and Sir Graham Watson were very much appreciated, as were the brilliant observations made by former Canadian PM Kim Campbell and Enrique Barón Crespo, the ex-European Parliament President highlighting what he called the current 'global disorder'. Those in attendance discussed the changing world order, EU-US tensions resulting from the actions of the Trump administration, the increasingly fraught nature of trade relations and new challenges to governance.

These topics were also debated in the meetings held with Nicoletta Fabio (the Mayor of Siena), Roberto Ciappi (the Mayor of San Casciano Val di Pesa), Dom Bernardo Gianni (the Abbot of San Miniato al Monte Abbey) and representatives of the Metropolitan City of Florence, as well as in events hosted by the Circolo degli Esteri (the social club affiliated with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Corpo Consolare

Fiorentino and the Spadolini Foundation. The two-week tour also included a number of stops in museums and other locations where Italy's extraordinary cultural and artistic heritage is preserved. The delegations took a particular interest in Michelangelo (the year 2025 marks the 550th anniversary of his birth) and Caravaggio. An event organised by Ars Pace and hosted by Marquess Francesco Mazzei entitled 'PEACE IN ART' was particularly appreciated.

It was held in Fonterutoli (Province of Siena), a place which has gone down in history for the peace treaties that were signed there which put an end to a number of territorial disputes between powerful Church dioceses, as well as the long-standing quarrel between Florence and Siena over how to demarcate the borders of the Chianti region. The event blended culture, emotions, peace and the sheer aesthetic beauty of Elisabetta Rogai's painting EnoArte@, for which she used the same wine that the visitors sampled while listening to the seductive sounds emanating from Andrea Ceccomori's flute. In an era marked by great change, new trade patterns, tariffs and mounting geopolitical tensions, the one true soft power is art, understood as a tool for peace and cultural diplomacy that can enable parties to establish a dialogue based on long-lasting international ties.

Given the extremely complex geopolitical landscape, we must react decisively and do so alongside Canada – a country with which we share values, a common history and an affinity for multilateralism – and our other strongest allies. The recent election of Mark Carney as Prime Minister of Canada strengthened the country's economic and trade relations with the European Union.

Monica Baldi is the Vice-President of the European Parliament's Former Members' Association.

Italy Study Tour

April 1 to 13, 2025



Over the course of 13 days, participants had the opportunity to engage in a unique cultural and political experience across three iconic destinations: Rome, Florence, and the Tuscan countryside.



The entire delegation at the home of the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell. Far left is former president of the EU and of the FMA, Enrique Baron Crespo. Standing next to Kim Campbell in gold is the Hon. Monica Baldi, vice president of FMA.



Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.



Léo Duguay and the Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell at the forum held in the School of Transnational Governance.



Our delegation meets with Italian former ministers at the Italian Parliament.



Dorothy Dobbie, Joyce Napier, former CBC journalist and Canadian Ambassador to the Holy See, and Hon. Sue Barnes.



Hon. Dennis Dawson, former senator.



Karen Redman and Charlette Duguay.



Peggy Nash and her friend.

The 2025 CAFP Annual General Meeting

By Dorothy Dobbie



Francis LeBanc, Hon. Sarmite Bulte, former congresswoman Hon. Donna Edwards, Yasmin Ratansi, former congresswoman Hon. Barbara Comstock, Monica Baldi, FMA vice-present, and Chungsen Leung.

The highlight of the year is always the CAFP Annual General Meeting held in Ottawa in June. This is a chance for former members to get together with old friends and learn that there is life after politics, just a different and in many ways better life when it comes to sharing our experiences.

All the angst and former bitterness is absent here. Members of every stripe mingle and reminisce on a very different level. It is warm and rewarding and well worth the trip.

It begins with a reception Sunday evening which used to be in the Speaker's reception room but has more often been in the McDonald Building since the Centre Block renovations began. This is a time to just socialize with no heavy agenda other than greeting old friends.

Our president emeritus, Léo Duguay and his lovely wife Charlette

generously hosted an evening at their home where we had the opportunity to discuss what is stalling democracy in all our countries. Out of this discussion has emerged another attempt to bring the issues to the forefront through international action.

The following day, Monday morning, is the Memorial Service held in the Senate Chambers with a reception immediately afterwards. Families and friends are invited to attend as we pay tribute to our former colleagues who have passed away the previous year. It is solemn and heartwarming to learn of their contributions. This year, we paid tribute to 32 of our departed colleagues.

The chefs at the Parliamentary Restaurant had made us a lovely cake for our annual luncheon, celebrating our 38th AGM. Our thanks to them and for all the hard work and support we get from the staff at the House of

Commons and the Senate to make this meeting special.

After Lunch, President Matt DeCoursey called the meeting to order and launched the business with a panel discussion entitled Enduring Relationships in a Shifting Geopolitical Reality, featuring newly minted former member, the Hon. Seamus O'Regan, and our special guests, Vice President of the European Former members Association Monica Baldi; former Congresswoman the Hon. Barbara Comstock and former congresswoman the Hon. Donna Edwards.

Monca Baldi was the gracious host of our earlier journey to Italy last spring.

During the business session, President Matt, voiced his profound thanks to Vice President Jack Harris for taking on the responsibilities office while Matt was forced to take a leave of ab-



President Matt DeCourcy presides over the panel. Left to right: The Hon. Seamus O'Regan, The Hon. Monica Baldi, The Hon. Barbara Comstock and The Hon. Donna Edwards.



Matt DeCourcy cuts the cake.



The laying of the Memorial wreath.



Vice President Jack Harris.

sence to deal with personal matters.

Francis LeBlanc reported on the work the association undertook to support the transition process after the election and Chungsen Leung tabled the financial report. We are still solvent, but we must find new sources of revenue. President Matt pledged that the appeals to the Board of Internal Economy will be reinvigorated.

These reports have been circulated in our newsletter. The nomination report was given, and special thanks were given to outgoing directors Matthew Dubé and Robert-Falcon Ouel-

lette. The goal, as always, is to balance the participation of members from across all parties and across this vast nation of ours.

Welcome to all who have joined the executive this year. It looks like it will be an active year with lots of energy and ideas to follow through on. The last item of business was two proposed study tours for this year: One to Tanzania led by Yasmin Ratansi and the other to Iceland, led by Léo Duguay. More details on the back cover

The CAFP AGM was followed by the AGM of the Education Founda-

tion by the Hon. Sarmite Bulte, who explained that there have been no fundraising plans or initiatives since the CRA did an audit a half dozen years ago that ruled that funds raised for the Foundation cannot be used to support CAFP initiatives. Therefore, CAFP must do its own fundraising instead of acting on behalf of or through the Foundation.

The conference ended with a reception and dinner that evening, the highlight of which was Chungsen Leung in his kilt marching the head table to their seats.

Celebrating Audrey O'Brien

A decade of leadership and legacy in Canada's House of Commons

By Joy Keke

Ten years after her retirement, Audrey O'Brien's legacy as the first woman to serve as Clerk of the House of Commons continues to resonate within Canada's parliamentary community.

When members of Parliament gathered to mark her retirement in April 2016, tributes poured in from across party lines.

"I rise today to recognize one of the true icons of Canada's House of Commons and our Parliament," said Hon. Dominic LeBlanc, then Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

"Calling Audrey a trailblazer would be an understatement, as her passion, integrity, and discipline have defined a career that has been nothing short of admirable and inspiring."

Appointed Clerk in 2005, Audrey O'Brien became the 12th person, and the first woman, to hold the position since Confederation.

Her appointment represented more than a personal milestone; it was a breakthrough moment for gender representation in one of Canada's most traditional institutions. Before assuming the role, O'Brien had already built a distinguished career in the House of Commons administration, beginning as a committee clerk in 1976.

Over the following three decades, she rose through the ranks with quiet determination, earning respect for her encyclopedic knowledge of parliamentary procedure and her steady, impartial counsel to members of Parliament.

The role of Clerk is often described as the "institutional memory" of the House of Commons—responsible for advising Speakers on rulings, ensuring the orderly conduct of debates, and overseeing the non-partisan officials who support parliamentary operations.

O'Brien embraced this responsibility with precision and humility, guiding

MPs through the complexities of Canada's evolving democracy.

During her thirty-year career, she served under seven Speakers and worked with ten Parliaments, offering expert guidance on everything from the introduction of electronic petitions to modernizing House operations.



Audrey O'Brien.

Then Leader of the Opposition Rona Ambrose described O'Brien as "a remarkable woman" who "has served this Parliament, her country, and all of us."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau echoed the sentiment, calling her tenure "an extraordinary life of service... not just to members in this House but to all of Canada."

Former Speaker Andrew Scheer recalled her steady presence at the Table, noting that her advice often came at crucial moments when parliamentary tensions ran high.

"Ms. O'Brien loved the House of Commons, loved Parliament, and loved our democracy," he said. "The lesson she left on me was that we have to take this place seriously, but we should not take ourselves too seriously."

His reflection captured the essence of O'Brien's leadership: firm when required, but always human and composed, even in the most heated debates.

From the opposition benches, Peter Julian of the NDP emphasized her ability to balance tradition with progress.

He praised O'Brien's procedural expertise and her modernization of parliamentary practice, adding that she was "a fierce defender of the independence of the institution from the executive branch."

That independence – protecting the House from undue political influence – was a cornerstone of her philosophy. She believed that Parliament must remain the people's chamber, not the government's.

Julian also pointed to O'Brien's pivotal role in the 2008 apology to Indig-

enous peoples, when she proposed convening the House as a committee of the whole to allow Indigenous leaders onto the floor.

This creative procedural solution upheld both parliamentary rules and the spirit of inclusivity that the moment demanded. It was a quiet but historic act of reconciliation within an institution built on rigid protocol.

Bloc Québécois MP Louis Plamondon remembered O'Brien for "her impeccable democratic principles, great discipline, and ever-present desire to serve the House with dedication and competence."

His words reflected what many MPs felt: that O'Brien personified the foundational values of the Commons—fairness, respect, and duty to the public.

Green Party leader Elizabeth May shared a more personal reflection, recalling her early days as an MP and the sense of reassurance O'Brien provided.

"As a newly elected member, my bible was the big green book, O'Brien and Bosc," she said. "Not a day goes by that I do not reach for my copy of her bible."

The book, officially titled *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, remains a definitive guide for parliamentarians and staff, symbolizing O'Brien's enduring imprint on the institution she helped modernize.

Beyond her procedural mastery, O'Brien was known for her mentorship—especially of women entering politics and parliamentary administration. Many MPs spoke of her generosity, wisdom, and quiet strength.

She took time to support young staffers and new members of Parliament, often encouraging women to see themselves as capable of leadership in spaces where they were historically underrepresented.

As LeBlanc concluded in his tribute, "always cheerful, respectful, wise, and fair, Audrey exemplifies the very best of service to Canada, to our democracy, and to Canadians."

Inside the role – House of Commons Protocol Officer

By Joy Keke

As the final flags are straightened and the last name cards adjusted, the air on Parliament Hill grows tense. Within minutes, international dignitaries will step through the doors of Parliament. At the centre of it all is Bernadette Salama, a Protocol Officer at the House of Commons.

Bernadette has spent over 10 years ensuring that every handshake, speech, and seating arrangement reflects Canada's commitment to respect and diplomacy.

"Understanding subtle cultural differences, knowing when to intervene, and treating everyone with respect are crucial," she said. "Every interaction is an opportunity to build trust, and that's the foundation of successful diplomacy."

Be it a king, president, prime minister or delegate, Bernadette's team cultivates a polished and welcoming image of Canadian democracy to the distinguished guests.

"You cannot be nervous in this job; you have to always be 'on,'" Bernadette said. "Observation, respect, and attention to detail are critical."

Her fascination with protocol and diplomacy was nurtured by mentors who emphasized professionalism, cultural awareness, and understanding people – lessons that shaped her approach to managing high-profile events.

"Over time, my interest in diplomacy and public service naturally led me to the House of Commons, where I could combine my skills and passion for serving people," she said.

A typical day in her role is far from routine.

Bernadette's day begins early, with a sense of anticipation hanging in the air. As the sun rises, she arrives at the venue and oversees the setup of seating arrangements and podiums. The protocol team meticulously checks flags and audio equipment, and Bernadette ensures



Bernadette Salama is the Protocol Officer at the House of Commons.

each detail aligns with diplomatic expectations.

Dignitaries arrive, greeted according to rank in a choreographed welcome that sets the tone. Throughout ceremonies and speeches, the protocol team orchestrates every detail.

As each special day unfolds, Bernadette keeps an eye on the clock, ensuring traditions are upheld and protocol hierarchy maintained through luncheons, toasts, and cultural interludes. Closing speeches, formal departures, and a debrief by the protocol team conclude the day.

"Flexibility is essential. Last-minute changes are inevitable, but staying calm, adjusting quickly, and communicating effectively with all parties ensures smooth execution every time," she said.

State visits represent the highest level of diplomatic co-ordination. These multi-day events are filled with ceremonial, political, and cultural components, with strict adherence to protocol. A typical first day might begin

with a ceremonial airport welcome, military honours, and photo opportunities, followed by official greetings at Parliament or Rideau Hall.

"Many people think it's glamorous like Hollywood, but it's really about serving people with respect and ensuring smooth, dignified interactions," she said.

Midday sessions often include high-level bilateral talks, discussions on trade, defense, climate, and culture, as well as the signing of agreements or memoranda of understanding. Cultural programs, museum visits, or memorial tributes in the afternoon highlight the host country's identity.

The day culminates in a formal state banquet, complete with speeches from heads of state, entertainment, and strict dress codes. Every detail—from seating to gift exchanges—is meticulously planned and documented by protocol teams.

"You must always maintain professionalism while being ready to adapt to changing circumstances," said Bernadette. "The goal is to honour protocol without letting rigidity interfere with event success."

Having studied translation at the University of Ottawa, Bernadette finds communication across multicultural settings is equally essential.

"Translation taught me not just to convey words, but to understand context, culture, and nuance. That awareness has been invaluable in my work," she said.

Beyond logistics, protocol ensures Canada's parliamentary system functions efficiently and upholds the country's reputation in diplomacy. Among her proudest achievements are events where every detail aligns perfectly and guests leave satisfied.

"I remind myself that each event is bigger than any one task," she said. "It's about representing people and organizations and making sure every interaction reflects respect and dignity."



Lynn MacDonald

Smoke-free legislation

Why did it take so long?

By Lynn MacDonald, CM

Cigarette smoking has long been the greatest cause of preventable mortality, illness and disability in Canada, as it is worldwide. Smoking on average reduces the smoker's life by ten years.

My Non-smokers' Health Act of 1988 was the first legislation in the world to establish smoke-free work and public places. It led to provincial and municipal laws, higher taxes, warnings on cigarette packages, and a ban on advertising and sponsorships. The result was significant declines in smoking prevalence.

Clear evidence of the harm of cigarette smoking became available as early as 1952, indeed in a methodologically superior study based at Oxford University. The three people who led the research, medical doctors Richard Doll and Richard Peto, and epidemiologist A.B. Hill, were given knight-hoods for their contributions. Doll was further honoured by the naming of a building after him at Oxford. Yet their findings led to no legislation in the United Kingdom to reduce smoking or protect non-smokers from second-hand smoke. Nor did any government anywhere else act.

Presumably governments, aware that 50 percent of their voters smoked, were fearful of alienating them.

Smokers worldwide enjoyed, in effect, a "right" to smoke. Businesses provided ash trays for their smoking customers, and no one worried about the other 50 percent. According to J.S. Mill's *On Liberty*, 1859, people have a right to do what they want, so long as they do not harm others. As the harm became better understood, action on smoking became evermore justified. An estimated seven million people die every year, worldwide, from smoking, 1.6 million of them from secondhand smoke.

The British research was followed

by that of the United States Surgeon-General, who in 1964 commissioned their first study, and then continued for years to publish annual reports adding to the findings of harmful effects.

Smoking rates gradually declined as the bad news circulated. In the U.K. they had been as high as 80 percent in the 19th century, although a mere 50 percent in Canada and the United States at that time and most of the 20th century.

Not until 2007 did the British Parliament adopt the England Health Act, which banned smoking in enclosed workplaces, but still exempted pubs and clubs (Canada's 1988 legislation did not have those exemptions).

Slowness to act in Canada

The first minister of health to warn that smoking was a "risk to health," an understatement, was Judy LaMarsh, 17 June 1963, eleven years after the (solid) British findings were published. She said: "There is scientific evidence that cigarette smoking is a contributory cause of lung cancer, and that it may also be associated with chronic bronchitis and coronary heart disease. Health agencies, including my department, have a duty to inform the public about the risk to health connected with cigarette smoking." This led to no action.

The first Canadian minister to try to bring in legislation on smoking was John Munro, in December 1968, who assigned the issue to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs. Led by MP Dr Gaston Isabelle, it conducted hearings with expert witnesses and published the lurid details.

The cigarette companies argued then, as they did in 1988 in committee on my Non-smokers' Health Act, that "no causality" had been found between smoking and lung cancer. The

Isabelle Committee's conclusions were timid: curbs on advertising and limits on nicotine and tar content. Munro commented: "Almost every minute of every day, we are urged, coaxed and cajoled to buy a variety of different brands of a potentially dangerous product — namely cigarettes....we are told that cigarettes increase pleasure, attractiveness, sophistication, and sexual potency." He introduced the Cigarette Products Control Act, which would curtail advertising and require warnings. Yet the government, under P.E. Trudeau, did not allow it so much as an hour's debate.

The dynamics were different with my private member's bill. Civil society groups, numerous medical and health organizations and leading unions supported it both in committee and by their own campaigns. Two P.C. backbenchers, Arnold Malone and Paul McCrossan, worked on their caucus colleagues. Brian Mulroney, prime minister at the time, had the vote whipped at third reading, although private members' bills are supposed to have free votes. The bill's success shows that committed backbenchers can make a difference. All the ten ministers who turned up for the vote at third reading voted against.

Connections with royalty

Cigarette smoking throughout this time was dignified with endorsement by members of the royal family. Two cigarette companies held a royal warrant, Dunhill, known as the "hygienic" cigarette as it had a cotton filter, and Benson & Hedges, the brand of King George VI, who died of lung cancer at age 56. Yet Queen Elizabeth II carried on granting royal warrants, her coat-of-arms printed on every package of those brands. Doll and Hill's documentation of harm dates to 1952, the same year George VI died of lung cancer.

Vaping, E-cigarettes

The same cigarette companies that argued that smoking was not a cause of lung cancer, or any other harm, turned to promoting vaping, or e-cigarettes, when they came on the market. Vaping, or the inhaling of vapour with nicotine in it, may or may not be more harmful than regular cigarette smoking. It will take time to find out, but the cigarette companies moved ahead, with advertising and the use of flavours agreeable to young people. Public Health Canada initially went along with this but soon followed the lead of Public Health U.K. and reversed its position. Both now acknowledge that e-cigarettes can be harmful themselves and also lead to regular cigarette smoking.

Where we are now, and next steps

“Smoking rates in Canada have declined markedly from the 50 percent of people 15 and older in 1965, to an estimated 12 percent in 2024. Some of that decline is likely due to the fact

that more young people vape than smoke.

New Zealand promptly followed Canada in bringing in legislation for smoke-free work and public places, and with it, health warnings, higher prices and a ban on advertising. Even better, New Zealand took the issue to the United Nations, to be turned into the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, 2003, to which Canadians also contributed greatly. New Zealand continued to give leadership by pioneering a new approach, called the “smoke-free generation.” It had already made age 18 the minimum for sales to minors. The new law would raise minimum age by a year every year thereafter. Given how difficult it is for smokers to quit, preventing young people from starting makes sense. The New Zealand law, however, was never implemented, but repealed by the next government.

The good news now is that the U.K. is close to adopting the same ap-

proach, with its “Smoking and Vapes Bill,” introduced by the previous Conservative government, Rishi Sunak prime minister, with MPs given a free vote. It was adopted at second reading, approval in principle, with full Labour support. A general election later, now with a Labour majority, its Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, has brought in a similar bill, which he termed “the most significant health intervention in a generation.” As this is written the House of Commons has adopted it and it has gone to the Lords. It looks like the U.K. has again moved to the front, where it was in the 1950s on documenting the harms caused by smoking. Is there an MP, or even a minister, who will make the case for a “smoke-free generation in Canada?”

Lynn McDonald was the NDP MP for Broadview-Greenwood 1982-88, awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal in 2025 for her private member’s bill, the Non-smokers’ Health Act.

Pursuing a public life

By Sergio Marchi

I have written a book, *Pursuing a Public Life*, which is being published in November.

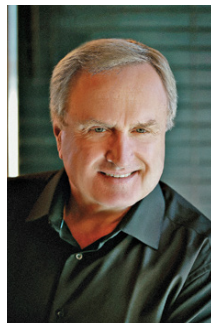
It’s a call to public service. It is also a practical ‘how to’ manual, on the strategic steps that young Canadians can take to successfully enter and serve in the political arena. It outlines how best to manage the public square, from nominations, to campaigning, to governing.

The broader context for the book is that public trust in our politicians is at an all-time low, and our politics has become increasingly divisive and nastier. As a result, democracy in Canada and around the world has become more fragile.

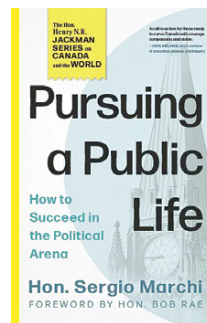
In the face of a diminishing political culture, more and more Canadians, particularly our youth, are giving public life a pass. And this worries me greatly because our country will always need strong political leadership.

Indeed, bold voices and fresh ideas are in urgent demand.

I also wanted to demystify the world of politics. That often, it is good old



Sergio Marchi and his new book Pursuing a public life.



fashioned hard work and perseverance that gets you over the finish line, rather than assuming that one has to be born with superior political attributes to succeed.

Most political leaders are made. They work hard, sometimes fall, learn from their mistakes, get back up, and go on to capture the imagination of their citizens.

Importantly, I wanted to capture the satisfaction and excitement that public life affords. There is a daily grind, for sure. Yet, there are enor-

mous rewards in fighting for the public good.

The book takes the reader through my different political roles and experiences over a 30-year period — as a community activist, political assistant, city councillor, MP, Minister, and Ambassador — all in an effort to share helpful insights and lessons for those who desire to learn more about public life. I also draw out the key lessons learned, 78 in all.

In closing, we simply must encourage and attract a wave of new and young candidates for public office.

To seek progressive perspectives that would help restore and rekindle our sense of public service and reinvigorate our national debate.

To elect new, young leaders who can excite and their own generation, and Canadians more broadly, about what is possible and regain their confidence.

Does it all sound a little too ideal? Perhaps. But I believe that when it comes to public leadership, we should set the bar as high as possible.



Dorothy Dobbie.

Democracy versus centralizing power

By Dorothy Dobbie

“The psychology of pre-war Germany under Hitler was characterized by a combination of collective national shame, the intoxicating effects of propaganda and indoctrination, a deep-seated belief in national superiority, and the systematic elimination of dissenting voices, resulting in widespread acquiescence or active support for the Nazi regime.” – AI

All over the world right now there is a feeling of uneasiness about the future. Partly this is engendered by the creeping concentration of power at the centre of our democracies.

It is happening here in our country, too, and not just in Ottawa. This process has been gradually gathering steam over the past 40 or so years, and it extends to provincial legislatures, towns and villages and even to big business.

I wrote last issue about how one glaring practice in politics has helped this along – the idea of centralizing the hiring and firing of ministerial staff to the office of the prime minister or premier, whomever that might be. This practice delivers the information flow to administrative offices and hinders the appointed manager of programs (the minister) from effectively making independent, politically informed decisions to recommend to the elected leader or cabinet and to be discussed with the caucus. In short, involving the voters through their representatives before a bill is tabled.

But there is more. We see the same concerns Canada is feeling manifest in places such as Europe and the United States. And to deal with this, the three associations of Former have once again come together to form a committee that will try to tackle this on an international scale. We have just begun, with our first meeting being held in September.

Léo Duguay is leading the process here in Canada.

At the same time, this sense of insecurity about democracy has been haunting legislatures and some of them have independently decided to pursue a similar agenda. Manitoba is among them. They have recently struck a committee to examine this issue at the provincial level.

I know some will push back on this idea, never having experienced anything but this leader-oriented system, but bear with me for a few more minutes. Yes, the leadership needs to know what is happening in its caucus. There are many ways to get this information – the most effective is to listen and question. Prime Minister Chretien was very good at requiring reports – reduced to a page at a time, but if he needed to know more that would stimulate the questions. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was an avid listener, making notes and understanding the essence. And yes, even back then they had their spies in offices, usually what appeared to be a junior, but one who had a double duty of observing the MP in action at a personal level. However, chiefs of staff and other key assistants were hired by the member not the “boss”. They reported to the minister or member and could be removed by him or her.

In a democracy, the idea is to elect a number of people who represent us, the people, to understand the mood and the needs of the constitu-

ency and to meld this with information that is not publicly or commonly available, and then to use their best judgement about the best way to move forward. The best representatives listen and engage. They have frequent town hall meetings, do meet-and-greets, keep an open constituency door so locals can drop by to share their thoughts and concerns or pass on information that may not be able to reach the halls of power any other way.

I know that this has been getting increasingly more complicated and that keeping an open door is seldom done. Constituency offices are sealed up like fortresses because members have been convinced that there are guns behind every tree. There are not and the most likely thing to happen is some annoying person dropping by with a bone to pick. We are supposed to listen to them, too. Often there is some real issue behind the bone that deserves attention.

You would think that today’s technology would make members far more accessible than in the past, but again apparently not. Not only can you often not reach the member by phone or Zoom, you cannot, in many cases, even reach a staff person – not in the office or at the constituency level. If you leave a message, too often nobody calls you back. Why? I am convinced that much of the time it is because the member has no power to do anything about your problem. That’s what happens when

you remove their ability to have real input. Members have become voting machines and often not even that is not in person. Speeches are written by staffer. Questions are pre-scripted. Often, even senior ministers read their answers.

This is not confined to any one party or Ottawa. It is being done everywhere. Remember, all this is also happening in legislatures as well as parliament. That way you have no “freelancers”!

Some of you reading this will be

recently released from office and you may be surprised that it wasn't always like this, but it wasn't. There were always a few single-minded folks in the House who didn't totally hoe the party line. That was annoying for leadership, but it could be refreshing, and it was a healthy venting opportunity. These types were great constituency representatives and often had very long political lives.

But that is the point. An MP has only one multitudinous boss: con-

stituency members. And that is what makes democracy what it is – messy, difficult to manage and uncomfortable for leaders.

You can believe in values and principles while disagreeing on methods to achieve those. That's the party system. It all works if kept in balance. And it is time to rebalance the system.

Dorothy Dobbie was the Progressive Conservative MP for Winnipeg South from 1988 to 1993.



The Hon. Sue Barnes.

Reflections on having been an MP

By the Hon. Sue Barnes

It's interesting to remember not really understanding just what was involved in this career of being a federal Member of Parliament in Canada. Everyone, just ask them, thinks they know what the job entails. You go to Ottawa, pass laws rapidly, then take the summer off.

Most people work very hard but don't appreciate the work that they don't fully understand. This applies to all fields, all income levels.

What I learned is that law making is usually slow and challenging and nearly always a compromise – certainly never perfect. As society evolves so will its governing legislation. Most legislation is reactive not proactive.

In our party system of government politicians are generally expected to vote Yea or Nea, sometimes abstaining. But rarely does this black/white end vote reflect what has come before. Everyone has good ideas that deserve consideration. In every community of people there is tremendous talent and diversity.

Over time I came to appreciate the differing perspectives of colleagues both on my own benches and those across the aisle.

You also rapidly realize that not every good idea can or will be funded and the understanding of the budget process becomes integral to performing the work of parliament.

Your job is primarily a service job to both your constituents and the country. Learning how to do that effectively is both the challenge and the opportunity that we have as parliamentarians. There is tremendous satisfaction in making a difference in the lives of your constituents and a multitude of ways that you can be of help.

It took time to figure out all the resources at your disposal – from using the research arm of the library of parliament, to briefings and accurate information dissemination, to countless hours meeting with people. Of course, there is your staff to assist you and you need to rely on them as an extension of your efforts.

I often marvelled how vast our

country is geographically. Coming from SW Ontario I realized how fortunate I was with the travel time each week compared to colleagues from the far north or east and west coasts. The travel definitely contributed to fatigue to the work weeks. On the other hand, having the ability to visit and experience the regions across Canada was a highlight over the years. Each unique area contributed to the majesty of our country.

From retirement now I understand just how much I value the friendship with colleagues from all parties. I believe the goals of all MPs are similar and positive. You learn from others and you provide your own contribution.

Our organization of Former Parliamentarians continues to provide access to those friends and colleagues through annual activities including the upcoming Christmas party on the Hill December 1, 2025. Perhaps this is the year you could make the effort to attend and reconnect. All are welcome and I hope to see you there!

Canada at a crossroads

Lisa Raitt urges courage and reform in 2025 Bell Lecture

By Joy Keke

In the uneasy calm following a federal election, former minister, the Hon. Lisa Raitt took to the stage at the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre on May 6, 2025, to deliver the Dick, Ruth and Judy Bell Lecture. She was urging Canadians to navigate an era of “heightened uncertainty” with both urgency and vision.

Lisa drew on her experience as a cabinet minister in the Harper government and now Vice-Chair in Global Investment Banking at CIBC Capital Markets, offering a candid reflection on the country’s political and economic future.

Speaking just one week after a federal election, she delivered a candid assessment of the nation’s future under the title, *Canada at a Crossroads: Navigating an Uncertain Future*.

Lisa’s perspective is uniquely informed by a career that has placed her at the centre of major public policy challenges, shifting from a policy taker to a policy maker, and now a policy shaper.

“Nobody in this country can have the ability to sit back and watch what’s happening because we’ve simply run out of time,” she said. “The path forward is not built by accident, but by bold, hard, but hopeful choices.”

As a Conservative MP for 11 years, Lisa held key portfolios, including Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Labour, and Minister of Transport.

Her cabinet experience directly relates to the lecture’s key themes.

As Minister of Labour, her willingness to use back-to-work legislation during strikes highlighted the government’s need to prioritize the fragile economy, a precursor to her current advocacy for long-term economic stability.

Later, as Minister of Transport, Lisa oversaw the complex policy response to the Lac-Mégantic disaster—the explosion of a derailed train filled with crude oil—a challenge that tested the limits of regulatory frameworks and public



Hon. Lisa Raitt speaks to the audience on stage at the Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre on May 6, 2025. Image courtesy of Carleton University.

trust.

This trajectory provides a holistic view of the policy lifecycle, which underpins her call for decisive action.

Lisa acknowledged Canada’s status as a stable and fortunate nation but warned, “Underneath the surface there is something that seems to be shifting.”

She diagnosed a national malaise where we’re “drifting,” responding to problems instead of anticipating them, and that the ambition that defined great national projects “is harder to summon.”

The most pressing challenge is economic complacency. Canada’s traditional model, built on resources, immigration, and public services, is showing cracks.

Productivity and Investment: Lisa noted that Canada’s productivity “ranks near the bottom among OECD countries.”

She argued that we risk putting future generations “into jeopardy” unless we take a hard look at systemic issues, stating, “Our tax system is outdated and it actually discourages business investment.”

Stressing the need for a bold, non-partisan housing plan, Lisa warned that

without it, “we risk permanently eroding the Canadian dream of middle-class stability.”

With a call for cross-partisanship to move past the short-term focus often induced by minority governments, Lisa also highlighted her current work as co-chair of the Coalition for a Better Future with former Liberal Cabinet Minister Anne McLellan.

This cross-partisan effort uses a scorecard of 21 key performance indicators to track and demand long-term, sustainable economic growth.

The domestic economy, Lisa insisted, cannot be fixed in isolation from the world. With geopolitical volatility rising – from strained relations with China to instability in the Middle East – Canada must define its role.

She questioned the nation’s foreign policy identity in a new era.

“Are we peacekeepers or are we peace builders or are we something entirely new?”

She said, “You cannot do any of this unless you have an economy that is resilient and is working for the country. Plain and simple.”

On climate change, the dual challenge is to reduce emissions while preserving economic opportunity, especially in energy-producing regions like Alberta and Newfoundland.

Lisa urged moving past the “either or” debate to build a pragmatic path forward. This includes scaling renewables, advancing carbon capture, and investing in nuclear energy.

She also emphasized the need for accelerated climate adaptation strategies to prepare for weather events that are already impacting Canadians’ lives, noting the early start to wildfire season.

Lisa concluded with a plea for engaged citizenship, urging the audience to participate actively.

The Hon. Lisa Raitt was the Conservative MP for Halton from 2008 to 2015 and the new riding of Milton from 2015 to 2019.

Catherine McKenna on swimming, politics, and running like a girl

By Joy Keke

Catherine McKenna didn't grow up dreaming of Parliament Hill. She dreamed of being an Olympic swimmer.

Though she didn't make it past Olympic trials, the discipline and determination she developed through competitive swimming would come to define her career. Training twice a day, often swimming up to 14 kilometres, taught her lessons that far outlasted the pool.

"Swimming showed me that you set a long-term goal, but you have to do the work every single day," Catherine said. "There are no shortcuts. No excuses. That mindset has carried me through everything since."

Her path to politics was anything but linear. Raised in Hamilton, Ont., Catherine attended a French Catholic school because her parents were determined that all four of their children become bilingual. Her Irish-born father and French-Canadian mother believed that learning both Canada's official languages would open doors – and they were right.

After completing a degree in international relations and French at the University of Toronto, Catherine went on to study at the London School of Economics. She then returned to Canada to pursue a law degree at McGill University, specializing in international law.

Her perspective on global justice shifted dramatically during her early career, particularly while working in Indonesia during the political upheaval that ended President Suharto's 25-year authoritarian regime. Catherine said she witnessed firsthand the courage of young students risking their lives in the streets.

"I realized what fighting for democracy really means," she said. "These kids that were 16 or 17 years old standing up to military fire changed me. It made me want to help in any way I could."

Back in Canada, Catherine became more and more invested in federal policy.

"From my perspective, we were backtracking on so many areas – both domestically and internationally," she said. "At some point, you have to decide: do you keep working outside the system, or do you step up and try to change it from the inside? So I ran."

And she didn't give up easily. Catherine spent nearly three years knocking on doors in Ottawa Centre before winning her seat in the 2015 federal election.

Soon after her election, she was appointed Minister of Environment and Climate Change under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's new government – a role that would thrust her onto the international stage.

As a minister, Catherine played a leading role in negotiating the Paris Agreement on climate change, the first international accord in which nearly every country committed to climate action.

At home, Catherine introduced Canada's first national carbon pricing system. Later, as Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, she oversaw investments in sustainable infrastructure and launched Canada's first National Infrastructure Assessment, a long-term strategy to build toward a net-zero future.

She was mockingly dubbed "Climate Barbie" and publicly denounced it as a sexist remark. After ignoring it initially, she chose to reclaim it as a symbol of resilience.

"I wasn't going to let them diminish me, or any woman, with labels," she said. "If anything, it just made me fight harder."

After six years in federal politics, Catherine stepped away from elected office in 2021. But she didn't leave climate action behind. She founded Climate and Nature Solutions, an advisory firm that helps governments, companies, and foundations accelerate climate solutions grounded in science and equity.

She also chairs the United Nations High-Level Expert Group on Net-Zero Emissions Commitments, which produced the Integrity Matters report for COP27, setting clearer standards for credible climate pledges.

In 2023, she was named a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honour for her international contributions. The following year, she received an Honorary Doctorate from McMaster University, in her hometown of Hamilton.

Her memoir, *Run Like a Girl*, which was just published, is a reflection on her personal and political journey, and a message of empowerment to the next generation.

"I think it's important to be real," she said. "People see the title 'Minister' and think it's glamorous. But it's really hard sometimes – professionally and personally. I want young people to know that not everything comes easily, but you still have to get up the next morning and keep going."

Catherine hopes that in 20 years she is remembered for her work in climate action and by her motto, "run like a girl."

The Hon. Catherine McKenna was the Liberal MP for Hamilton, 1999 to 2019.

Retrospect: Women in politics – the 35th Parliament

By Jan Brown

Politics from most vantage points has been an unfavourable environment for women. It has dwarfed the accomplishments of those women who have challenged tradition, hidden barriers and social biases to pursue a political career. What are the prerequisites necessary for women to succeed in public life where power, influence and aggression predominate? Can women dare to play the game using similar tactics and responses and get away with it? Changing the gender agenda of politics is about the feminine pursuit for equality within a network subtly prejudiced and still punctuated by the prevailing attitudes of today's society.

(At the time this article was written Jan Brown was the member of Parliament for Calgary South East.)

At first blush the current 35th Parliament appears like no other. Two hundred and five rookie MPs eagerly take their places in the House of Commons and fully 18 per cent of the total 295 are women. Unprecedented in terms of the lack of experience and the large gender mix.

These internal changes may fool us into believing that the increased number of female MPs indicates an emerging autonomy and thereby acceptance for women in politics. This is foolhardy in the extreme because the old prejudices of what constitutes “women’s work” have not yet been discarded. For example, women still face subtle criticisms because a public life is not yet considered to be compatible with family life. Questions such as “how can you leave your family?” or “who is taking care of the home front?” remain constant reminders that society still has specific role definitions for women.

We do not start our new beginnings with the throw of a switch. There is no simple procedure.

Things can be untidy, but even more so when attempting to establish oneself in an environment traditionally outside of what is considered normal for women.

For the most part women have taken many of their cues from “pop culture”; assumptions about parenting, the responsibilities of men and women in the workplace and at home, and acknowledgement of traditional conjugal relationships that reflect long-established social norms. Women come from a world that is mirrored on the images of their mothers. It is domestic not politic. So, no wonder society continues to define the feminine public persona on the basis of motherhood statements rather than from any particular inner drive or competency level.

This stereotype, sustained by patriarchy, pictures women as servants, nurturers, motherly organizers who often give way to their emotions. How could they ever be competent participants in the game of politics where the rules are tough and ill-defined and the predominantly male players (the guys) are mutually and securely bonded as a group.

Politics then represents an overwhelming challenge for women. Not only are they struggling to rid themselves of a stereotypical social role, but they also have to re-establish themselves in a new environment; one that is quite foreign to the world in which they initially socialized as children.

Having said that, it is more than tempting to blame the socialization process for trivializing the role of women. A narrow sphere of expectations exists, rarely challenged, limiting women’s aspirations to the domain of hearth and home. This conditioning can be traced back to ancient times when women were denied access to public office, giv-

ing rise to the strong prejudice that remains and that attempts to shut women out of political involvement. But why has there been so little change within this belief system?

Quite simply women have not yet learned the fundamental law of political economy; exchange is based on the value the merchandise has when offered to the buyer, not the seller. Subsequently, there is no exchange between the two sexes that is based upon an equal value system. Therefore, the value of public feminine contributions is not highly prized in our society.

And nowhere is this more keenly demonstrated than when a woman makes it to the backbench of politics. It is considered a breakthrough when a woman moves into territory long held by males. Few see comparable excellence in such an achievement, only a challenge to tradition.

There was a sense after the 1993 federal election, given the numbers of women MPs (18%) that Parliament might emerge as more consensus-driven, more collegial, less confrontational. Well, 18% does not of itself constitute a threshold for change. We would be over-indulgent in the extreme to believe that, because success in politics is not simply a numbers game. Women can talk about a “critical mass” as having influence, but the game of politics is brokering; it is the deal-making in the hallway. Women are going to have to make themselves visible and effective here because it is the place of power and influence and it is not decorated in petal pink floral.

Power is predicated on the historical rule of kings and the long-established relationships with the male powerbrokers of the ruling class. The male tradition dies hard especially when traditional roles and the accompanying division of labour between men and women turns in-

ward to perpetuate that male tradition. So, one wonders if men will ever feel comfortable using brokerage politics with women. And because women tend to compromise in deal making, their challenge will be to overcome their unpreparedness in developing a full-blown pursuit in traditionally male territory. They need a different kind of savvy.

This is not to say that the dynamic for change has not begun. The guideposts followed in the past are starting to show signs of weathering. Greater numbers of 30-something women are working outside of the home; parenting responsibilities are now being more openly shared by both parents; women are in more equitable ratios in those training settings traditionally held by males; baby boomers are greying; and overall expectations for 20-something women have changed.

These young women are significantly different from previous generations when mobility and role division greatly influenced how we would live and work. They are exposed to a wide array of options and consequently may choose to never marry, may choose to never have children and indeed expect to be treated as equals.

While it is true that women tend to bring with them a different kind of imagination, judgement and reason it is ultimately influence that determines the major political players.

If you were asked to name the ten most successful people you know, doubtless the list would include a disproportionate number of males. We have come to expect men to succeed, and women, well, not to be in the top 10. Even when they are, we tend to question why. Acceptance with cynicism becomes a metaphor for indifference.

The Tory leadership campaign of 1993 drew significant contrasts between the world of the family and the relationships within it and the public world of work and political achievement. Success appeared



The Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell.

to be dependent upon how readily women related to men in a form that was more comfortable and familiar to the expectations of everyone. The effort was illusionary and fleeting.

We are left with the mirage of Kim Campbell, the image of Audrey McLaughlin and the political spotlight has caused both to wilt, maybe in part, because people expected them to wilt. Power and influence have yet to cross gender lines. Women have to build a history of consistent success rates to positively reinforce this particular dimension of job-match. We lack the ability to be successful because we are neither experienced nor very skillful at using the particular form of power expected in a political environment, which is quite simply “power over”, getting your own way.

We are told that aptitudes and skills developed in one setting will be useful in another. This means little in politics when such naiveté can place women at a disadvantage to successfully compete. Women back off from this kind of approach because there is a tendency to be labelled as “bitches” or “redneck.” So where do we go from here?

We will have to learn how to build

dependencies without becoming dependent, how to access currently under-utilized resources without losing leverage and understand what is important to the various constituencies without becoming compromised. A tall order in a context that is constantly challenged by the agendas of those who roam the hallway.

The heat in the kitchen can be intense and sometimes we are tempted to get out. However, we will never see meaningful change unless we are prepared to confront tokenism and the false pride perpetuated by a “critical mass”.

For example, the opportunity to demonstrate how a future Parliament may look was lost recently to the tokenism exhibited on International Women’s Day. It was in some respects a male indulgence to placate “the little woman” and we fell into the trap. All the ingredients for success were there; the opportunity for visioning a new Parliament with a new style; attendance by all female MPs so that the numbers indeed would have at least a visual impact. But it failed. The debate did not involve the complete caucus of women parliamentarians and ultimately will become merely yellowed pages in Hansard. It remains a mystery why anyone even bothered. The choice to set women apart in such an orchestrated exercise illustrates we never really play in the game. Both men and women perpetuate this aspect of the “agenda”.

Now is not the time for women to avoid the effort required to achieve meaningful political involvement. Women should move away from the established power style of coercion and consider how to use their own sense of political empowerment within the model of brokerage politics. Avoidance, of course, is the easier path and how comforting to know that if we do that we will rarely embarrass ourselves. What paralysis! Let us not ever say we simply died of failure because we did not try.

Jan Brown was elected as a Reform Party member in 1994 and served until 1997. Not much has changed for women since then.

Roy Cullen on the international trail

By Roy Cullen



Roy Cullen with Bill Graham (right) in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka sojourn

In 2003 I accompanied the late Bill Graham, shortly after he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, to India, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The trip to Sri Lanka had one unusual twist. Given the civil war that was in progress in Sri Lanka at that time, pitting the Sinhalese Government against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), we had insisted that in addition to meetings in Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, we would meet with members of the Tamil community on their own turf so that we could hear both sides of the story. Both Bill and I had relatively large populations of Tamil-Canadians in our ridings.

A trip to Jaffna was organized. Jaffna was a city in the north of Sri Lanka that was populated by the Tamils, but which, at that time, was occupied by some 30,000 Sinhalese troops.

During a reception of invited guests in Jaffna, I heard a commotion at the door. I asked Bill's Assistant to check out what was going on. He reported back that three members of the Tamil community from Toronto had flown to Colombo, and travelled by car to Jaffna, knowing that Bill and I would be visiting the area.

Security was understandably very tight, and security personnel had denied the three visitors entry because they were not listed as invitees. I went to the door, chatted with the three individuals



Roy Cullen with Frank Mahovlich (right) at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

and concluded they were indeed from Toronto and posed no threat.

I made sure that they were allowed to enter. Following the reception the three visitors from Toronto, in lieu of the Sinhalese army, gave us a tour of Jaffna. Imagine the politics for Bill and me if they had been denied entry to the reception after having travelled all that distance!

Some years later, when my wife and I retired to Victoria, B.C., we had the occasion to re-acquaint with the former Canadian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Valerie Raymond. Valerie had hosted Bill and me for dinner at the High Commission residence in Colombo during our visit.

Now, in retirement and in a social setting, she was able to describe the angst that was created for her and the Sinhalese government when Bill and I insisted on a meeting with the Tamils!

Regrettably Valerie passed away in 2023.

Diana Krall and Taiwan

One somewhat different experience as an MP was meeting Diana Krall, the Canadian jazz musician, in Taipei, Taiwan when she was there on tour in August 2002. As Canadian parliamentary

delegation leader, I worked with the executive director of the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei (CTOT), together with the Taipei Economic & Cultural Office (TECO) in Ottawa, to organize our one-week information gathering tour of Taiwan.

Leading up to our tour of Taiwan, I discovered, in discussion with the executive director of our Taiwan Trade Office, that Diana Krall was performing in a concert in Taipei during the week of our visit. I asked if we had any free nights in Taiwan and was told there was one evening with no events planned. I was, and remain, a huge fan of Diana Krall.

I asked the executive director if the delegates were interested in attending the concert at their own expense, could he arrange tickets for the group?

Certainly, we could do that, was the reply. I canvassed the six delegates and most, if not all, of them wanted tickets to the concert. I conveyed this to the exec director and he undertook to purchase the tickets, and I committed to pay him when we arrived.

Would it be possible to meet Diana Krall backstage after the concert? I enquired. Sure enough, CTOT organized

a backstage reception and invited thirty members of the local business community and local politicians, and also representatives from Taiwan's music industry to the event. BINGO!

After the sold-out concert and after numerous standing ovations from the audience, we began our walk down the centre isle to the stage area. As I was doing so, someone from CTOT approached to warn me that Diana was very tired and would not stay too long at the reception. Ugh, I thought to myself. One of the delegates on our tour was the Conservative MP from Nanaimo, Reed Elley.

I had asked Reed to say a few words after the introductions, since Diana hailed from Nanaimo, and I asked him to present her with a small gift from the Parliament of Canada which I gave to him before the show. Diana arrived backstage and I introduced myself and the other members of the delegation. After a few other introductions I gave

the floor to Reed. He spoke very well and touched on the battle that Diana's mother had experienced with cancer of the breast, and how her mother had crusaded against breast cancer while she fought her own battle. Knowing that Diana and her mother had a very close relationship, and that her mother had passed away only months earlier, I glanced over at Diana and tears were rolling down her cheeks. She headed for the wings of the stage. O, my goodness, I thought, what now?

In a few moments, Diana was back and gave Reed a big hug. One of my poorest delegation decisions ever, I thought.

I would have enjoyed that hug!

Celebrity trumps politics!

During my term in the House of Commons from 1996 to 2008 I participated in the work of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Assembly, which included visits to Strasbourg from time-to-time for sessions of the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

On one occasion I led a Canadian delegation, which included Senator Frank Mahovlich, to a PACE session. During one of the debates, I noticed that the Russian delegation had risen from their seats and seemed to be heading our way. I turned and asked our members, and the Library of Parliament staff advisor who had accompanied us, if anyone was aware of any issues that would cause the Russians to seek to collaborate with us.

No ideas were forthcoming. When the Russian delegation arrived, I quickly became aware of their agenda. It was solely to take a photo of their group with Senator Mahovlich who they remembered fondly, and/or respectfully, from the Canada-Soviet Union hockey Summit series in 1972!

Roy Cullen was the Liberal Member of Parliament for Etobicoke North from 1996 to 2008.

Beyond Question Period

By Roy Cullen

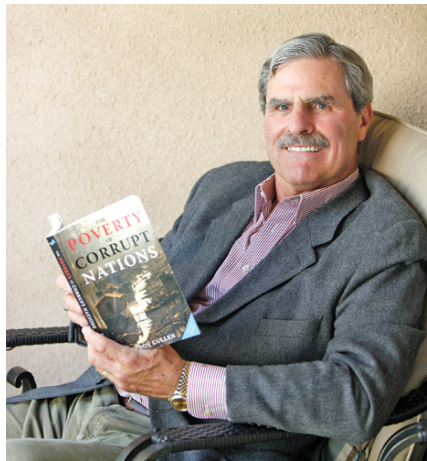
“My book, *Beyond Question Period*, or what really goes on in Ottawa is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Trafford Publishing, and others.

“In *Beyond Question Period* you travel with a Canadian Member of Parliament and discover how challenging, yet exhilarating, the work of an MP can be. Running for election, debating and voting on bills, committee work, constituency work, representing Canada internationally, and speaking at a variety of events – this is just the beginning.

“How the role of an MP changes in a minority, or a majority government, or in opposition is described with examples. The cut and thrust of politics-in-the-raw is described for all to see.”

Here is an excerpt from *Beyond Question Period*:

“Mexico, like Canada, has observer status at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and, given our North American and NAFTA connections, we would always meet with the Mexican delegates over lunch in a restaurant housed at the Council



of Europe precinct. We would cover a range of topics at these lunches and then engage in some idle chatter.

“At one of these sessions I asked the Mexicans how they viewed Hugo Chávez Frías, the President of Venezuela. They all smiled, leaving me with the impression that they thought more highly of other world leaders. Being diplomatic, however, they avoided any negative comment but one Diputado (Mexican Congressman) told us a story of an invitation

he had once received to attend a small dinner party at the Presidential Palace of Mr. Chávez.

“As the group of fifteen attendees took their places at the table, it became clear that, in addition to the President's place at the head of the table, one other chair was missing a participant. When the President finally entered the room and took his place, he welcomed those in attendance, pointed to the empty chair, and told those assembled that that chair was reserved for Simón Bolívar. This surprised the group given that, although Mr. Bolívar was much loved and respected for the key role he had played in Latin America's successful struggle for independence from Spain, he had died in 1830!”

“My other two books, *The Poverty of Corrupt Nations*, and *A Cursed English*, are available on Indigo-Chapters, and the other sites mentioned above.”

Roy Cullen was the Liberal Member of Parliament for Etobicoke North from 1996 to 2008. He has written several books and articles on life in politics.



Myrna Driedger

Addressing the challenges of the shortage of women in politics

By Myrna Driedger, OM

We've come a long way! Or have we? **Does it matter if women are underrepresented in politics?**

In 2023, 30.6 per cent of elected parliamentarians in Canada's House of Commons were women¹. In 2013 that number was 24 per cent. Provincially the numbers vary across jurisdictions.

As of July 2025, women hold 27 per cent of seats in national parliaments globally, across all chambers (lower, upper, and unicameral). (data.ipu.org). In 2013 that number was 20 per cent.

So, there has been a slight improvement of the numbers over the last decade. But it's not just in politics where the numbers of women in leadership positions are low. As of 2024, women held 29.8 per cent of board seats among TSX-listed public companies in Canada, based on disclosures from 610 companies. For S&P/TSX 60 companies, the figure is higher at 39.7 per cent (osler.com). As of 2021, women held 30.8 per cent of senior management positions in Canada, according to data from the 2021 Census of Population².

As of 2025, women make up approximately 49.7 per cent of the world's population, based on global demographic data from sources such as the United Nations and the World Bank. In Canada, women make up 50.34 per cent of the population. So, if the world is made up of 50 per cent of women, are they well represented if only 27 per cent of their elected representatives are women?

Why is it important to have more women involved in the political process?

According to the United Nations, a threshold of at least 30 per cent of fe-



Myrna Driedger, former speaker of the Legislature in Manitoba, chairing a meeting of the CWP.

male legislators is required to ensure that public policy reflects the needs of women. I would take this a step further and say that at least 30 per cent of a cabinet – where the policy decisions are made – is required. I also question if the 30 per cent number is adequate in 2025.

Why does this matter?

It matters because women bring a unique experience to the political arena. Their life experiences are different from men's, and their perspectives on issues can be different from men's. This serves to enhance the quality of debate and broaden and balance policy perspectives on a wide range of issues of importance. You get a bigger and broader mix of ideas. It does not

mean that women have a better perspective than men, it's just a different perspective.

So, what could I do?

In Manitoba, in the first 100 years of women being able to run for provincial office, only 51 women were elected! In that same period over 850 men were elected! I am one of that small number of women who were elected. I was also the first woman to be elected in my constituency – and re-elected six more times. I served for 25 years. So, it can be done!

Gender issues had never been something I focused on in the beginning. I never sat around my Caucus table and looked at my colleagues as men or women. I saw us as equals because we



65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Halifax from August 20-26, 2022.

all got there the same way. We earned it! We fought for it!

While gender didn't factor into my view of politics at first, my awareness of this gap issue grew over many years in politics. I came to realize that society loses too much if this is ignored. There are, indeed, a number of challenges women face that keep them from running. Some I've learned by living them; some I've learned by talking to women from across the world; some, I've learned by watching others; and some I've learned through doing a lot of research.

All of this led to my involvement with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP). Their goals are to get more women elected to address some of the issues that keep women from embarking on this journey.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP)

I became involved in the CWP – Canada Region around 2005. I became part of the effort to convince the male Speakers from across Canada,

who made up the Regional Council of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), that having a CWP as part of CPA would be a benefit for all and not a threat.

In 2011, I became the first Manitoban to be elected for a three-year term as Chair of the Canadian Region of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians by my peers from across Canada. In 2012, I then represented Canada on CWP International including being elected Vice-Chair for a year.

CWP works for better representation of women in legislatures throughout Canada and The Commonwealth and strategizes and acts on gender-related issues such as domestic violence. In 2022, I took on the role of President of CWP International and hosted an international conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where issues of concern for women were discussed and debated.

CWP is part of the larger Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

(CPA). As of April 2024, there are 4,205 women parliamentarians across the 180 Commonwealth national and sub-national parliaments in the nine regions of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), representing an average of 25.9 per cent of the total parliamentary seats. (cpahq.org).

Created in 2005, the CWP Canadian Region is composed of women parliamentarians of the provincial and territorial Canadian legislatures and the federal parliament. Its aims and objectives are to:

- Provide opportunities for strategic discussion and development for future and current parliamentarians
- Increase female representation in our parliaments
- Foster closer relationships among Canadian women parliamentarians
- Foster relations with other countries having close parliamentary ties with Canada; and
- Discuss, strategize and act on gender related issues in Canada and



International Steering Committee.

internationally.

CWP Canada’s mission is to assist Canadian women and girls to discover their potential, experience the fulfillment of a career in public service, and create a better society.

All female parliamentarians in Canada are eligible to participate in CWP.

Steering committee

The CWP-Canadian Region is governed by a steering committee that promotes the views and concerns of women parliamentarians throughout the region and is responsible for developing programs to further the aims of the CWP. It is composed of one representative from each province and territory and one representative from the federal parliament. Its operations are overseen by a chair, who also represents Canada on the CWP Steering Committee (international).

Outreach programs

The importance of awareness campaigns on the role of parliamentarians, the parliamentary system and the political process is key to increasing engagement, especially among youth. The CWP works independently and

“Women who have achieved success...have won a victory for us, but unless we all follow up and press onwards, the advantage will be lost.”

– Nellie McClung

in partnership with existing campaign schools and encourages other legislatures and advocacy groups to develop similar programs.

Role models

Visible representation of women in Parliament can serve as role models for future generations of women leaders. Seeing women in positions of power can inspire girls and young women to pursue careers in politics and other male-dominated fields, thereby contributing to greater diversity and inclusion in leadership roles.

Video

The CWP Canada Region undertook a project in 2014 to promote the work of the CWP through a short bilingual video produced during an outreach session which can be found at cwpcanada.ca

In the end, the debate around the

participation of women in politics, while having merit as a “numbers game” must go beyond that. Increasing women’s involvement ensures a more equitable, responsive and robust political system. Our agenda needs to be the development of workable, sustainable, dynamic strategies to increase women’s participation in the political process.

Notes:

1. (www150.statcan.gc.ca)
2. (www150.statcan.gc.ca)

Myrna Driedger, OM, was an MLA in the Manitoba Legislature for 25 years, seen of those as the Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. She received the CPA Commonwealth Parliamentarian Life-Time Achievement Award 2023 in recognition of parliamentary service and commitment to Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, especially in the Canadian Region.

Reconciling History

A Story of Canada



Jody Wilson-Raybould
Publisher, bestselling author of *True Reconciliation*
 & Roshan Danesh

Jody Wilson-Raybould and Ronash Danesh's Reconciling History

Reviewed by Eli Zima Luste

Reconciling History: A Story of Canada by Jody Wilson-Raybould and Roshan Danesh. Published by Penguin Random House Canada Limited in 2024. 368 Pages. \$39.95

Reconciliation is a word we hear about regularly in politics, media, and online discourse. But what does it actually mean? One critical thing of note is that Indigenous people in Canada are not a monolith. Indigenous people, like all people, have varying opinions, perspectives, and lived experiences which help form their identities and beliefs – even on Reconciliation.

As Jody Wilson-Raybould writes off the top of her 2024 publication written with Roshan Danesh, “I am trying to do what the totem pole beckons us to do, which is to look and see from many different perspectives” (II). In understanding this, this book should be taken as a story of Canada through the lens of how Jody Wilson-Raybould and Roshan Danesh understand Reconciliation.

Split into four parts, “Guided by the structure of the Kingcome pole,” there is Part 1: First Ancestor, Part 2: Raven, Part 3: Wolf, and Part 4: Thunderbird (II). Each part marks a different section on the Kingcome pole.

Part 1: First Ancestor begins by highlighting that “if we want to reconcile, as we so often say we do, we need to know from where we came. And for that, we need to start at the beginning” (p. 19). It recognizes that there is no universal “First Ancestor” story for Indigenous people and so tells the stories of multiple nations – from the Mi’kmaq to the Haida, and

many nations in between. Acknowledging the oftentimes oral tradition of First Nations storytelling, it highlights how stories have been passed down through language and art. Jody later states that “to understand and make sense of the history of Canada, we need to understand what existed here before Canada.” and so Part 1 of the book closes with citations, stories, and excerpts of life pre-European contact (p. 29).

Part 2: Raven opens by discussing the 1910 petition put forward by the leaders of the Secwépemc (Shuswap), Nlaka’pamux (Okanagan), and Syilx Peoples (Couteau) in the interior of British Columbia to Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier. Jody discusses her views on this petition, and then goes on to cite many interactions, petitions, statements, and government documents made by and between Indigenous Peoples and European colonists, as well as first impressions by both groups over the course of hundreds of years. These carefully chosen citations paint a picture of what life and interactions were like during the times of contact and the years following it. Jody’s comments provide important context, connecting the history to today’s understanding of Canada.

Part 3: Wolf moves us to the next point on the Kingcome pole. One where moving forward and acting is encouraged. “The howl of the Wolf is loud and uncompromising [...] and when it comes, we cannot help but respond,” says Jody (p. 101). Wolves, we are told, also can act in the shadows, and it is this way that Jody understands the work of her grandmother, Pugladee, Ethel Pearson, and many others with the goals of governing their lands and people as they choose.

Part 3 continues the citations of notable interactions and conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, but with the focus on actions taken by both groups. Further petitions are cited, but so are stories of resistance by Indigenous peoples, examples of betrayal and the consequences, legal cases, battles, and both Parliamentary and international interventions.

Part 4: Thunderbird is the top of the Kingcome Pole. Jody writes that the wings of the Thunderbird atop the Kingcome pole are spread, and she appears ready to take flight. “This is how I think of my people, of Indigenous Peoples, at this moment in time. The challenges remain great. But what we are now bearing witness to is the taking flight of Indigenous Peoples in contemporary Canada” (p. 219). Jody highlights in this part the positive (and sometimes negative) more recent actions made in Canada in Reconciliation, but also general actions and progress made between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

From speaking of Canada’s slow coming to terms with historic wrongs, like residential schools, to expanding on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 2015 report, this section is a contemporary look at Canada’s relationship with Indigenous people. The statements of Indigenous leaders are frequent in this part of the book, as are their reflections on Reconciliation and the place of Indigenous people in Canada.

To Jody, the work of reconciliation involves both destruction and construction. The concluding section of this book provides a deeply moving recap and connection to all which

had been said previously in the book. Bringing in a few additional well-placed quotes from Indigenous Canadians, Jody also used this final section as a call to action. “I leave you with these similar words that I use whenever I speak on reconciliation across Canada: Have courage, be willing to be uncomfortable, and recognize that every contribution to shaping a more just future for Canada is a valuable and needed contribution. Building our future takes all of us. We need you. We need us. Together we walk” (p. 316).

The different parts of the books, and their complex yet important

metaphors, were a treat to uncover throughout the book. The history of Canada represented by the Kingcome pole allows the reader to aptly understand the narrative which Jody sought for the reader to unravel at their own pace. A unique composition of first-hand stories, accounts, and documents bound together with the careful narration and context of Jody – this book brought me through a journey of re-understanding Canada’s history. This book allows for present-day Canada, and Canada’s history to be better understood, understood more profoundly, and more in line with how First Peo-

ples here view it.

I would recommend this book to anyone. Canadians, non-Canadians, younger Canadians, older Canadians, those who have worked on Reconciliation for years, and those who are just now hearing about it. As I wrote off the top, Indigenous people are no monolith, so reading this book allows for the understanding of one Indigenous person’s perspective (Jody Wilson-Raybould’s) on Canada’s history. But if you are looking to better understand Canada and its history or Reconciliation and its challenges, you should not hesitate to grab this book off the shelf.

Review on time in politics with former MP Tony Van Bynen

By Eli Zima Luste

The choice to enter politics at any level is both unique and personal. Some are called upon, others seek it out, but whatever the reason, the desire to serve and improve the lives of one’s fellow citizens is the cornerstone of a life in politics.

Leaving politics is sometimes more complicated. Disenchantedness with the system and polarization, personal relationship strains, being required to retire constitutionally, or losing an election or nomination race are just some of the often discussed bases for exiting a most demanding public life.

For Tony Van Bynen, the two-term Liberal Member of Parliament for Newmarket-Aurora, both entering and leaving politics were not decisions made lightly. Tony was a member of Parliament for five and a half years, after a 30-year banking career and 18 years as an elected municipal politician, including 12 years as mayor.

“I chose to retire when I reached the milestone age of 75, mindful that this is the mandatory retirement age for senators,” he says. “That parity gave me pause and ultimately shaped my decision.”

“Setting a clear retirement benchmark recognizes the value of experience while creating space for renewal

and fresh voices. My own journey—from finance to local leadership to Parliament—taught me that orderly transitions strengthen institutions and respect both citizens and colleagues.”

Uniquely, Tony planned his exit from politics with ample time before the election. In March 2024, more than a year before the election was ultimately held, he announced his intention to retire. Despite this, he states that “wrapping up the office and changing my ID to “former” was a bit solemn and reflective for a few days. It was good to participate in the CAFP AGM to help put my thoughts into perspective going ahead.”

A common question which former Parliamentarians ask themselves is what they will do with their time following their exit from politics. For some, especially those who planned their exit, a new job or function might already be lined up, for others, it takes a bit more time to figure out what to do with all of the time on their hands after such a demanding job.

Tony shared that since retirement, he’s been busy doing different things—golf, photography and catching up with friends and family, relationships that often took second

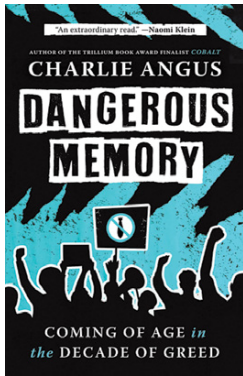
priority to House duties. He is still actively involved in his local riding association in a support role.

“We have a lot of bright, talented people in our community that I would like to help progress along the way,” Tony says.

Continuing to give back to one’s community remains a common theme among those who chose a political life. For Tony, a sticking point is his pride in the government’s implementation of the Early Learning and Child Care Act and the Canada Disability Benefit Act, and more personally, his advocacy in securing funding for the Disability Act in the 2024 Budget.

Tony remains grateful for the trust placed in him by his community and is “proud to join the community of former parliamentarians who continue to serve Canada through counsel, mentorship and civic engagement.”

One’s life of service does not need to end when one’s time in elected or appointed politics does. The Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians offers a variety of ways for former Parliamentarians to remain engaged in service, as few people know how to serve and give back better than they do. To learn more about these opportunities, please visit <https://exparl.ca>.



Charlie Angus' Dangerous Memory

Reviewed by Eli Zima Luste

Dangerous Memory: Coming of Age in the Decade of Greed by Charlie Angus. Published in Canada and the USA in 2024 by House of Anansi Press Inc. 320 Pages. \$26.99

Charlie Angus' 2024 publication is an engaging story, a chronicle of sorts, yet also somewhat of a memoir. Divided into three parts, we begin by learning about Charlie's humble beginnings. His grandmother Jenny Boyd Angus, a woman who impacted his life and helped shape his politics from a young age, and the ever-moving, ever-changing globe of the 1980s are cornerstones of this first part.

Charlie's personal impressions – but also factual recounts – of that era's events, from Iran, Afghanistan, and Chile, as well as his life in Toronto, fresh out of high school, allow the reader an insight into his political motivations. His involvement with workers' movements and belief that what he saw happening around him during the 80s – from job losses and economic imbalance to war and great inequality globally – could and should change are common themes. I was left understanding that Charlie's coming of age was happening at a time when the world was maybe not becoming the better place it had continually been up to that point in history.

Part 1 of the book is littered with references and stories about some of the most notable and impactful events of the 1980s – both in Canada and globally. Charlie's disdain for Neo-Liberalism, the general Reagan-Thatcher economic policy, and anti-labour attitudes culminate in his declaration that "Reagan became the driving force behind the dangerous sabre-rattling that marked the 1980s" (p.19). The importance of his Catholic faith is made clear

as well throughout this first part of the book, and we hear of his encounters with characters like future city councillor Joe Mihevc, and future NDP colleague and fellow band member Andrew Cash.

We learn in the aptly named chapter "The Moment that Everything Changed" of his first encounter with his to-be wife, Brit Griffin, and how their relationship and shared values culminated in their desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves. L'Étranger, the band formed in high school by Andrew Cash and Charlie, proved to be an important part of Charlie's early political activism too. From opposition to Margaret Thatcher to frequent social-justice framed lyrics, it must have been fate-aligned for Charlie to meet the three years his elder postgrad student Brit at a L'Étranger gig in August 1982.

Part 2 of the book is where we learn of Charlie's early activism with Brit Griffin. Opening their own house of hospitality, a three-bedroom apartment at Ossington and Dupont in Toronto, was their decision to stop talking about "when" and start actually doing something to make the world better. They called it the "Angelus Catholic Worker House." Their experiences there, helping people with addiction, seeing the AIDS epidemic, alcoholism, and drug addiction destroy lives around them, were extremely touching and raw.

The final section of the book speaks of Charlie's remaining years at the hospitality house. He writes of the Canada-USA free trade agreement, his – and Labour's – opposition to it, and its consequences. In his eyes, it resulted in a "Race to the Bottom" (p. 244). This section of the book delivers a salient reflection relevant to current tensions between Canada and the U.S.

In Part 3, we learn of Charlie's optimism at that time. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, and the authoritarianism which came along with it. Charlie shares his reactions to the events of the world, and how with his one-year-old daughter, he found himself increasingly wanting to improve the world.

The closing of the Angelus House and Charlie's move with Brit and their two children to Northern Ontario's Cobalt, brings the roaring 1980s life of the couple in Toronto to a close. Part 3 of the book ends with a tease of Charlie's entry into politics but is followed by a conclusion that wraps up the narrative Charlie had been secretly depositing page after page.

Throughout the novel, Charlie draws parallels between Canada and the world in the 1980s, and Canada and the World today. These comparisons are some of the most important takeaways from this publication. Where to go from here is the question Charlie closes with, both posing and answering. While I encourage you to read what he has to say exactly, I interpret his message to be that one should act. Act in ways that you can. Act in ways that you feel are important. But as long as you act to improve the world one day and one person at a time, then you are doing alright.

As he writes in the opening, "[this] book is an offering of dangerous memories to a young generation" (p. 3-4). An eye-opening, witty, and blunt piece, this book proved to be an important reminder that we share more in common with those whom we often view as so different from us, and that a dangerous memory is not always a bad thing, especially if it propels you forward.

Remembrance Day 2025 Ceremony



On behalf of CAFP, Matthew Dubé lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



An RCMP Officer at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



The Right Hon. Mark Carney (front centre), and his wife, Diana Fox Carney (right).



Mr. Greg Peters (left), Usher of the Black Rod, and the Hon. Raymonde Gagné, Speaker of the Senate.

Our tribute to those who have passed on

By Mia Parker and Hugo Laviolette



The Hon. Ione J. Christensen.



The Hon. Kenneth Dryden.



The Hon. Kirsty Duncan.



The Hon. Arthur Jacob Epp.

The Hon. Ione J. Christensen **Oct. 10, 1933 - Sept. 15, 2025**

Born on October 10, 1933, in Dawson Creek, B.C., and raised in Fort Selkirk and Whitehorse, Ione Christensen was a trailblazing Yukoner. After earning a degree in business administration from the College of San Mateo in California, she worked in the Yukon government before being appointed the first woman Justice of the peace and the first woman judge in the Juvenile Court in 1971. She also served as the Commissioner of Marriages and Clerk of the Small Debts Court for the Government of Yukon. Elected as the first woman mayor of Whitehorse in 1975, she served that role until 1979 when she was appointed as commissioner of Yukon, the first woman to hold that post. Christensen was appointed to the Senate in 1999 by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, where she served the territory until 2006. She is recognized as a Member of the Order of Canada (1994) and an inaugural member of the Order of Yukon (2019), amongst many honours. Remembered in Yukon for opening doors for women, serving the territory with pride, and her century-old sourdough starter, Christensen passed away on September 15, 2025. She was predeceased by her husband Art (2020) and is survived by their sons

Paul and Philip, and grandson Harry.

The Hon. Kenneth Dryden **August 8, 1947 - Sept. 5, 2025**

Hockey Hall of Fame goaltender, lawyer, politician, businessman and author, Ken Dryden, passed away on September 5, 2025, at 78. From Hamilton, Ontario, Dryden anchored the Montreal Canadiens' defence in the 1970s, winning six Stanley Cups, five Vezina trophies, the Conn Smythe Trophy and a Calder Memorial Trophy before retiring in 1979, only 8 years into his professional career. After hockey, Dryden authored ten books, one of which, *The Game* (1983), was a raging success and was nominated for a Governor General's Award. Dryden also served as the Toronto Maple Leafs president from 1997 to 2004. Dryden entered federal politics in 2004, winning his seat in York Centre under the Liberal umbrella, a position he held until his defeat in 2011. In parliament he served as Minister of Social Development from 2004 to 2006. Among his many honours are his appointment as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2012, his induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1983 and the Ontario Sports Hall of Fame in 2011, and the retirement of his No. 29 by the Canadiens in 2007. He is survived by his wife Lynda and their two children.

Hon. Kirsty Duncan **Oct. 31, 1966 - Jan. 26, 2026**

Kirsty Duncan was born in Etobicoke, Ontario, and served the riding of Etobicoke North from 2008 to 2025. She was a scientist, known for leading an Arctic expedition to uncover the origins of the 1918 influenza pandemic, and serving on the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Kirsty also taught meteorology, climatology, climate change, and medical geography at various universities and was awarded an honorary PhD. She wrote three books: *Hunting the 1918 Flu: One Scientist's Search for a Killer Virus*, *Environment and Health: Protecting our Common Future*, and *The Exclusion Effect: How The Sciences Discourage Girls & Women & What To Do About It*. Kirsty was also a gymnast of many years. In Parliament, she was Minister of Science and Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities. Kirsty was married to Sven Spengemann, a fellow Liberal MP who served in the House of Commons from 2015 to 2022.

Hon. Arthur Jacob (Jake) Epp **Sept. 1, 1939 - July 5, 2025**

Jake Epp was born September 1, 1939 in Manitoba and spent his life in teaching and politics. After work-



The Hon. Marc Garneau.



Mr. James William Gouk.



Guy Wilfred Lauzon.



The Hon. John McCallum.

ing as a high school history teacher, Jake was elected to the Steinbach City Council and was a passionate advocate for a public library in Steinbach, and one was later built and named after him. He ran for the federal Progressive Conservatives and won the riding of Provencher in 1972. Jake was an MP for over 20 years, and served as Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Minister of National Health and Welfare, Minister responsible for Manitoba, and Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. As health minister, Jake played a role in ending smoking in places such as commercial airlines and developing Canada's first Level Four Containment Lab to help combat infectious disease, which was recognized internationally for fighting the SARS virus and developing the first Ebola vaccine. He is survived by his wife Lydia, his daughter Lisa Epp-Coleman and his two granddaughters.

Hon. Marc Garneau

Feb. 23, 1949 - June 4, 2025

Marc Garneau was born February 23, 1949 in Quebec City, and was Canada's first astronaut in space. He held a doctorate in electrical engineering and served in the Canadian Navy from 1974 to 1983. He became the first Canadian to travel to space in 1984. Marc was later president of the Canadian Space Agency from 2001 to 2005. Sitting as an MP from 2008 to 2023, Marc was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Develop-

ment and Minister of Transport. He is survived by his wife Pam Garneau and four children, Yves, Simone, George, and Adrien.

**Mr. James William (Jim) Gouk
April 15, 1946 - May 27, 2025**

James William Gouk was born April 15, 1946 to hard-working Scottish immigrants and had a career in air traffic control. He dedicated his time to community organizations and the rotary club. He was Alderman of Castlegar, B.C. before winning the Kootenay West–Revelstoke seat federally in 1993, and representing the region for more than 12 years. Jim was an MP for the Reform Party of Canada, Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance, and finally the Conservative Party of Canada. In the House of Commons he worked as a critic on many significant files. After retirement, he spent his time golfing, hiking and bike riding. Jim is survived by his wife Ann of 55 years, their two children and three grandchildren.

Guy Wilfred Lauzon

April 6, 1944 - June 22, 2025

Guy Lauzon was born April 6, 1944 in St. Andrew's West, Ontario. He had a career as a business manager, union executive and entrepreneur before his election in 2004 for the riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. He won the riding for the Conservative Party five times. Guy held critical roles, was the party's deputy whip, and became the

Caucus Chair. In government, he became parliamentary secretary to the minister of agriculture and agrifood and later for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario. One of his major accomplishments was his 51 years of sobriety, achieved on June 7, 2025. Guy married Frances Lauzon and later Carol Lauzon, and is survived by his two children, seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Hon. John McCallum

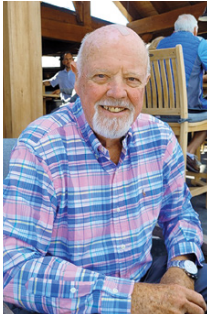
April 9, 1950 - June 21, 2025

John McCallum was born April 9, 1950 in Montreal, and had a career as a professor, economist, ambassador and author in addition to his political work. He was elected to represent Markham six times, and was a Liberal MP of over 16 years. He was Jean Chrétien's Minister of National Defence, Paul Martin's Minister of Veterans Affairs, of National Revenue and Natural Resources, and Justin Trudeau's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. He was previously chief economist for the Royal Bank of Canada and dean of arts at McGill University in Montreal. After his time in office, John was an ambassador to China and a special advisor. He was married to Nancy Lim and had three children.

Hon. John Horton McDermid

March 17, 1940 - Dec. 6, 2024

John Horton McDermid was born in Hamilton, Ontario on March 17, 1940, and began his life in poli-



The Hon. John Horton McDermid.



The Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie.



The Hon. Donald H. Oliver.



The Hon. Gail Shea.

tics when he was elected as an MP in 1979. He won the Brampton–Georgetown seat four times for the Progressive Conservatives, serving in Parliament for over 14 years. While in office, John held several cabinet roles in the Brian Mulroney government, including Minister of State for Housing, International Trade, Privatization and Regulatory Affairs, and Finance and Privatization. He also dedicated his personal time to the United Church of Canada and local charities. John received many honours including the Queen’s Diamond and Platinum Jubilee and the King Charles II Medal. After living nearly 79 years with a loving adoptive family, he discovered seven biological siblings and formed a new relationship with them. John married twice and previously worked as a radio and television announcer and was a public relations manager.

Hon. Kelvin Kenneth Ogilvie
Nov. 6, 1942 – July 15, 2025

Kelvin Ogilvie grew up in Summerville, Nova Scotia and went on to become a university professor of chemistry for forty years. He is credited with inventing the antiviral drug Ganciclovir, with the development of the chemistry of the “Gene Machine,” an automated process for the manufacture of DNA, and with the synthetic creation of the transfer RNA molecule. He is a Member of the Order of Canada for his scientific contributions. Kelvin was appointed

to the Senate in 2009 and retired in 2017. He chaired the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Kelvin is survived by his wife Roleen, daughter Kristine, son Kevin Alexander, five grandchildren and his two sisters.

The Hon. Donald H. Oliver
Nov. 16, 1938 – Sept. 17, 2025

A lawyer, real estate developer and politician, Donald H. Oliver was the first Black man appointed to the Senate of Canada from 1990 to 2013. From Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Oliver graduated from Acadia University in 1960 with a degree in history and subsequently earned his law degree in 1964 from Dalhousie University. He practised law as a civil litigator in Halifax for over 36 years, during which he also taught at his alma mater and served on several legal committees and boards of private companies. During his senatorial career, Oliver chaired the Standing Committees on Transport and Communications, and Agriculture and Forestry, also being named Speaker pro tempore in March 2010. Outside of politics, he founded and led several community institutions, such as the Black United Front, the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia and the Neptune Theatre Foundation. Oliver was named a member of the Order of Canada in 2019 and appointed to the Order of Nova Scotia in 2020. He passed away on September 17, 2025, at the age of

86. He is remembered by his wife, Linda, and their daughter, Carollynn.

The Hon. Gail Shea
April 6, 1959 – August 21, 2025

From bookkeeper and civil servant to Canada’s fisheries minister, Gail Shea first took elected office as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island from 2000 to 2007 for Tignish-DeBlois. In provincial politics, she served as Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, as well as Minister of Transportation and Public Works. She became the first non-Liberal MP from Prince Edward Island in 24 years by winning her seat in Egmont in the 2008 federal election. Later that year she was the first woman from PEI selected to the federal cabinet after being appointed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, a role she kept until the 2011 federal election, where she won re-election and subsequently became Minister of National Revenue. She was moved back to Minister of Fisheries in 2013 and served in that portfolio until her electoral defeat in 2015. Remembered by constituents for her community-first approach, she always advocated for PEI and was actively involved in local organizations. Shea passed away on August 21, 2025, in O’Leary, PEI. Predeceased by her husband Russell (2021), she is survived by their five children, 17 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

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Study Tour of Tanzania

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Fall 2026



Aerial view of downtown
Nuuk, the capital city
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