

## UPF Canada's Ambassador for Peace Service Awards and Banquet

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October 23, 2022



*Awardees with UPF Canada leaders and other Ambassadors for Peace*

On a most beautiful autumn day, October 23, 2022, in Toronto, Canada, Universal Peace Federation members and friends gathered for the first time in person since January 2020 for the most wonderful, joyful evening in almost three years. On this day, however, there was a sense of celebration in the air at the Mississauga Grand Banquet Hall as almost 250 Ambassadors for Peace (AFP), UPF members, friends and guests came together to honour three outstanding Canadians (all women, and all immigrants) with the UPF's *Ambassador for Peace* Service Awards, as well as to appoint nearly 40 new AFPs.



was to see everybody and how "Canada is a country that embraces UPF's ideal to pursue interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values." His thoughts were echoed in the warm congratulatory remarks conveyed by letter from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and various Toronto Members of Parliament, in video by Ontario Premier Doug Ford and in person by Member of Provincial Parliament Sheref Sabawy, who stayed until the end of the program, expressing his gratitude for the invitation to "such a special evening".



Magically serenaded by two teenage Filipinos singing the UPF anthem, "*Where Peace Begins*", the audience was elevated to a wonderful, inspiring atmosphere in preparation for UPF International Chairman Dr. Thomas Walsh's keynote presentation – a thorough, yet brief, explanation of the extraordinary depth and breadth of UPF's global activities, culminating in a powerful series of slides of recent events.

A most substantial dinner followed, during which all could enjoy ethnic entertainment from local singers and dance groups from the Nepalese and Colombian communities, and as well, renew relationships and make new friends after the long COVID hiatus.

Following dinner, Dr. Franco Famularo, UPF Canada President, gave an uplifting and thorough explanation about the AFP program. He was then joined by Drs.

Walsh, Kim and other UPF representatives to honour the three awardees for their contributions,

respectively, in the realms of community activism, service and a lifetime of public leadership. Short, very moving videos were shown about each of their lives, to which each added words of gratitude and wisdom after receiving their handsome glass awards.



The program ended with Norma Carpio, 2019 Most Influential Filipina Woman in the World Awardee, UPF Award recipient in 2020 and President of the Ontario Ambassadors for Peace, thanking all for coming and exhorting all to continue, expand and improve the excellent work of UPF. Then the singing and dancing began!

### The three awardees:



**Agnes Miranda**

*"I want to be a person who plays an important role in contributing to the realization of peace."*

Driving force and current President of the Philippines Independence Day Council, she has continuously built bridges and provided opportunities for Filipino- Canadians to promote and embrace Filipino Culture through her community programs, fundraising events and charity works, for which she has received multiple honours and recognitions.



**Phymean Noun**

*"During the awards ceremony, I was immersed in an atmosphere that I had never experienced before, and I was at a loss for words because I was truly moved. Thank you very much."*

A Khmer and winner of the World's Children's Prize in 2015, she survived Pol Pot's "Killing Fields" as a child, then she was a teenage orphan caring for a younger niece. While working for the UN in Phnom Penh in 2002 she met children scavenging the dumpsites, begging for chicken bones. Immediately she gave up her job, sold her home and began her first school on a garbage dump for these, the poorest, most disadvantaged. Today there are 3 such schools serving over 1500 women and children, sustained by Phymean's continuing selfless investment.



**The Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine,**

*"I was very impressed with the entire program. I am so glad and happy."*

Born in Grenada, she came to Canada to study education, became a teacher, then a principal. Always socially involved, in 1973 she founded the Toronto branch of the Congress of Black Women of Canada, becoming the National President in 1987. In 1993 she made history as the first African Canadian woman to be elected to the House of Commons and subsequently, a cabinet minister. Her legacy includes the placement of the Famous Five statue on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and introducing the parliamentary motion that created Black History Month in Canada.