

WFWP and UPF Canada Honor Women Peace Leaders in Canada

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The annual Toronto Universal Peace Federation (UPF) Ambassadors for Peace (AFP) Awards Banquet, co-hosted this year by Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), was held at the J and J Swagat Convention Centre in Markham, Ontario, on Saturday, October 26th, 2024. With a theme of "Honouring Women," nearly 200 guests gathered in a full hall, captivated by the evening's honorees, including Dr. Dawn Wabmemee Lavell-Harvard, a lifelong advocate for Indigenous peoples' rights, and keynote speaker Mrs. Kaeleigh Moffitt, President of WFWP-USA.



Guided by MCs David Stewart and Victorieuse Sambao, the program began with Rev. Yvette Shank, an 80-year-old Métis AFP and former President of the Church of Scientology in Canada, offering the Land Acknowledgment. Local 9th-grade student Mee Young Gabriel sang the National Anthem and, along with 8-year-old Ukrainian singing sensation Zlata Barchuk, 16-year-old Antoinette Targa, Nicolas Manlapaz

(17), and the youthful “Top Gun” dance team, provided wonderful entertainment throughout the evening.



Dr. Moonshik Kim, Chairman of UPF Canada, spoke on the significance of the AFP network, noting that in honoring women, we were also honoring Mother Moon, co-founder of UPF and WFWP. Congratulatory letters from Prime Minister Trudeau and local MP Chiang were shared, and warm greetings were extended by local councillor Juanita Nathan and MPP Laura Smith. Lilly Tadin, President of WFWP Canada, reflected on the essence of womanhood, discussing the unique perspectives women bring and highlighting some of WFWP’s remarkable achievements over its 32-year history.



Adding to the night’s reflections, previous AFP Service Award recipients Nadarajah Moorthy and Henry Lee spoke on the vital role of women in their lives. They were followed by Major (Ret’d) Don Kennedy, newly appointed as an AFP, who spoke warmly about his respect and love for his wife, HooJung, one of last year’s awardees, as she joined him on stage.

Dinner - a lively, spicy Indian feast - was filled with laughter and conversation. The evening’s entertainment helped the audience refocus for Kaeleigh Moffitt’s profound keynote address. A moving

video, “Chosen,” with glimpses into the lives of Father and Mother Moon, preceded her speech. Titled “The Missing Piece in Peacebuilding,” Kaeleigh shared insights from her Peace Studies course, reflecting on Nelson Mandela’s powerful reconciliation with de Klerk in South Africa. She then drew from Mother Moon’s memoir, particularly the story of meeting Kim Il Sung, North Korea’s leader, with a heart of forgiveness: “Before setting foot in North Korea, we had to resolve any painful feelings knotted up in our hearts. We had to forgive Kim Il Sung... Only with the heart of his mother could I forgive.” Kaeleigh’s address highlighted three keys to peacebuilding: a selfless, global perspective; applying true love in action; and embracing all people with a parental heart.



Kaeleigh’s words set a powerful tone for the Service Award presentation to Dr. Dawn Wabmemee Lavell-Harvard, whose life has followed in the footsteps of her mother, Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, an advocate and past President of the Ontario and Canada Native Women’s Associations. Dawn’s powerful video, “Journey for Justice,” reflected on her life’s work and mission. Now the Director for First Peoples House of Learning at Trent University, Dawn shared stories from her decades-long work to reduce the heartbreak of families affected by missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The room was silent as she spoke of her dedication and of the hope she sees in the small victories achieved through mutual understanding.



The evening concluded with the appointment of 11 new AFPs, including prominent members of the Canadian Multi-Cultural Council and the Senior Tamils Society of Peel. The night was memorable, filled with meaningful exchanges, photos, and renewed connections - a truly inspiring celebration of those who tirelessly work toward peace.