

**Celebration of the 10th anniversary of the *Freedom at Last* Project  
& Presentation of a plaque of appreciation  
to former Ottawa Centre Member of Parliament Paul Dewar**

Last Sunday, December 16, 2018, the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa, the Vietnamese Canadian Centre, and VOICE Canada (Vietnamese Overseas Initiative on Conscience Empowerment), in collaboration with the Vietnamese Canadian Cultural Organization of National Capital Ottawa, the Vietnamese Canadian Senior Citizens Association of Ottawa, and the Association of Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces of Ottawa, held a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the *Freedom at Last* (FaL) Project at the McNabb Community Centre, 180 Percy St., Ottawa.

To start the event, following the salutations of the Canadian and Free Vietnamese flags, Haquyen Nguyen, President of the Free Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa welcomed the honoured guests, the refugees who arrived in Ottawa under the Freedom at Last Project, and other participants.

Next, Can Le, President of the Board of Directors of the Vietnamese Canadian Centre and former National Coordinator of the *Freedom at Last Project*, gave a Power Point presentation on the activities that Mr. Dewar had with the Vietnamese community during his 9 years as Member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre and after, including his tour of the country in his bid for the leadership of the national New Democratic Party (NDP). Afterward, Haquyen, together with Tin Nguyen - the son of a FaL refugee, Dr. Loc Nguyen, who arrived in Ottawa in 2014 - presented to Mr. Dewar a plaque of appreciation of his support of the community. Haquyen also, on behalf of the community, presented to the Dewar family a set of commemorative coins issued by the Royal Canadian Mint in celebration of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. These coins were designed by Dr. Hieu Truong, former Director of Engineering of the Mint.

In his remarks, Mr. Dewar said that he was very moved by these gestures and very grateful for the support that the Vietnamese community in Canada has given him and his family, including the support that he received in bid for the NDP leadership.

To continue the program, Can Le presented the achievements of the *Freedom at Last* Project which was initiated in 2008 to bring to Canada under the Private Sponsorship Program, 282 Vietnamese refugees who were stranded in the

Philippines and Malaysia for a long time. Afterward Ky Anh Do, President of VOICE Canada, explained how his group continued the work of the project by sponsoring Vietnamese refugees in Thailand and Indonesia, and some Syrian refugees.

With the musical entertainment provided by the Ottawa Music Ensemble, the gathering was attended by over 70 people, including the following guests:

- Joel Harden, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for Ottawa Centre;
- Honourable David Kilgour, former Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, Secretary of State for Asia Pacific, Secretary of State for Latin America, and nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012;
- Monica Wu and Robert Yip, Asian Heritage Month Society of Ottawa;
- Ottawa Lawyer Lawrence Greenspon;
- The Most Venerable Thich Bon Dat (Pho Da Buddhist Temple)
- Ky Anh Do, President of VOICE Canada, members of VOICE Canada, and two VOICE-sponsored refugees who recently arrived from Thailand;
- Tuy Tran, President of the Vietnamese Cultural and Heritage Association (Montreal);
- Thu Tran, President of the Vietnamese Canadian Cultural Organization of National Capital Ottawa;
- An Hoang, A/President of the Vietnamese Canadian Senior Citizens Association of Ottawa, and President of the Association of Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces of Ottawa;
- Nguyen Nguyen, Muoi Bich, and Hung Nguyen, VCC supporters from Toronto;
- Khanh Lan Ho, SBTN Toronto
- Eileen Kilgour (daughter of Hon. David Kilgour)
- Dr. Hieu Truong.

The gathering ended at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Organizing Committee was grateful for the contribution by many people to this event, including:

- The Ottawa Music Ensemble (Phuong Thu, Hong Nhung, Kim Thoa, Hy Hoang, Kim Hang, Kim Khanh, Vu Dung, Huy Dien, Duy Vinh)
- Bao Do, Phuong Lethebinh, Vinh Nguyen: sound system, facilities;
- Tuan Trinh, Vinh Nguyen: photos;

- Soi Do, Uy Le, Ngoc Nguyen, Nga Le, Lan Le: foods;
- Hoang Van, Hue Le: information dissemination.

Furthermore, the Organizing Committee was also grateful for the financial contributions of a number of participants totalling \$1,050.00.

The CTV broadcast a news item on this event at 11:30 pm of the same day. It can be seen in the following video clip:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1558049> (from 8'15" to 9'14")

*VCC, December 21, 2018*



*Haquyen Nguyen and Tin Nguyen present a plaque of appreciation to Paul Dewar*

*Photo: HQ*



*Paul Dewar & his wife Julia, Most Venerable Thich Bon Dat, Can Le, Ky Anh Do, Haquyen Nguyen, Monica Wu, and Hon. David Kilgour*

*Photo: TT*



*Paul & his wife Julia, guests, and participants*

*Photo: HQ*



*The Ottawa Music Ensemble*

*Photo: TT*



*FaL refugees and participants*

*Photo: VN*