

Report

Fund-Raising Gala for the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Calgary, July 23, 2011

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all those attending the fundraiser for the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project, organised by the Calgary Vietnamese Association in collaboration with the Vietnamese Canadian Federation.

On behalf of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to building our nation.

This event is an ideal opportunity to reflect on the history of your community and especially that of the "boat people" and their quest for freedom.

Above are the remarks given by Rob Anders, Conservative M.P. for Calgary West, at the gala organized on July 23 at the Calgary Chinese Community Center by the Calgary Vietnamese Association in collaboration with the Vietnamese Canadian Federation, to raise fund for the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project in Ottawa.

Noting the determination of the overseas Vietnamese community all over the world to keep the Freedom and Heritage flag (3 red stripes on a golden background) as a symbol for the struggle for democracy, freedom, and human rights in Vietnam, he went on to say:

You have chosen Canada as your home and have made tremendous historical, cultural and economical contributions to our country.

The Vietnamese community in Canada is strong and independent. The Vietnamese Heritage and Freedom flag displays these qualities.

The fall of Saigon in 1975 ushered in communist oppression for those valiant defenders of Free Vietnam in the south.

May the Vietnamese people continue their resistance to communist oppression in Southeast Asia. May you work with others promoting freedom in Southeast Asia, the South Koreans, the Tibetans suffering oppression, protesting Burmese monks, those in Nepal opposing Maoist rebels, the Taiwanese yearning for independent recognition, those in Hong Kong fighting to preserve freedom of expression and Falun Gong supporters suffering oppression.

Mr. Anders was one of about 400 guests attending this event.

After 4 months of intensive preparation, the gala finally took place with Lisa Thuy Duong of U.S.-based Asia Video Productions and Hieu Tran of Calgary as MCs, and with musical performances coordinated by Calgary's Blue Sea Music Band.



*Tuyen Lam presenting a souvenir scarf to Rob Anders
Photo: VCF*

After the greetings by Hieu Tran, President of the Calgary Vietnamese Association, and Tuyen Lam, President of the Vietnamese Canadian Federation, Can Le, National Coordinator of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project, gave a presentation on the background and the achievements to date of the project.

Six years after the official launching of the project in December 2005 by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation, the Federation has been able to purchase a piece of land to build the museum at the intersection of Preston and Somerset in Ottawa (opposite corner from the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument that the Federation helped build in 1995), the Project has completed Phase one (Land Acquisition) and is now proceeding to Phase 2, Construction. The Federation is in the process of establishing an Implementation Team with Dr. Le and Ms. Tuyen Lam as Co-Chairs. Other members of the team will be announced later.



*From left to right: Thu (Organizing Committee, OC),
Tram Anh (singer) Tu Anh (OC), Phuong Anh (OC),
and Huyen Tran (singer)
Photo: VCF*

Following the presentation on the project were the greetings by the other 2 guests of honour, Teresa Woo-Paw, MLA for Calgary – MacKay, and Moe Amery, MLA for Calgary East.

The entertainment program consisted of performances by 3 well-known local artists -- Huyen Tran, Tien Dai, and Tram Anh and by 2 very popular U.S.-based singers, Vu Khanh and Thuy Huong.



*Vu Khanh, Thuy Huong, Tien Dai, and Lisa posing
for a souvenir photo with Tuyet Lam and Can Le
Photo: VCF*

The auction at the gala featured a “Stage Wedding” featuring Lisa herself, and the selling of a Vietnamese dress once worn by a well-known singer, Nhu Quynh, at a *Paris by Night* show, and some donated art objects. In addition, there were contributions by individuals, organizations, and businesses in Calgary, including \$4,000 by the Vietnamese Veterans Association of Calgary and \$10,000 donated by 2 individuals, with \$5,000 each.

After all expenses, over \$40,000 was raised at this event for the Museum Project.

All in all, the gala was a smashing success.

The Calgary Vietnamese Association and the Vietnamese Canadian Federation are grateful for the contributions by all donors and sponsoring organizations, for the performances by the Blue Sea Band and the singers, and for the devotion and hard work by all volunteers in the organization of this gala.

Truong Giang
July 28, 2011