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PRESS RELEASE

**Fund-raising gala for the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project
with a special tribute to Marion Dewar
Ottawa, November 19, 2009**

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation today announces a gala to be held on November 19, 2009, at the Sala San Marco Banquet Hall, 215 Preston St., Ottawa, to raise funds to build the Vietnamese Boat People Museum. The gala will feature a tribute to the late Mayor of Ottawa Marion Dewar who spearheaded Project 4000, a program to resettle thousands of Indochinese refugees in Ottawa.

Over a million and a half people fled Vietnam following its fall to the Communists in April 1975. Most of them were called the *Boat People* since they escaped in small leaky boats in the perilous South China Sea. It was estimated that up to half a million of the refugees never made it to shore. They were either killed by pirates, drowned at sea, or starved to death. About 150,000 refugees eventually resettled in Canada.

Launched in December 2005, the Museum Project has the following purposes:

1. To present the historical facts of the quest for freedom of Vietnamese refugees - the majority of whom were boat people - and their resettlement worldwide;
2. To showcase the contribution of the Vietnamese community to the resettlement countries.

The museum project has received wide public support both within and outside the Vietnamese community in Canada, and from all three levels of government. Land has been purchased to construct the Museum, at the intersection of Preston Street and Somerset Street West, opposite the Vietnamese Commemorative Monument -- featuring the statue *Refugee mother and child* -- that the Federation helped build in 1995.

The gala is supported by a number of public institutions, non-profit organizations, and businesses in the Ottawa area including the CBC – Radio Canada, the Ottawa Citizen, the Ottawa Police, the Catholic Immigration Centre (CIC), the Somerset West Community Health Centre, and the Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Service Organization (OCISO).

Philanthropist Dave Smith will help with the auction of art objects and Adrian Harewood, host of CBC News Ottawa Late Night on CBC Television, will act as Master of Ceremony.

Contributions to the project can be sent to: Vietnamese Canadian Centre / Museum Project, 249 Rochester St., Ottawa, ON K1R 7M9 Canada. All donations above \$5.00 will be issued receipts for income tax purposes.

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