

Speech by Senator Vivienne Poy

Tasting Diversity: a celebration of immigrant women and their cooking

October 29, 2002

I want to thank Working Women Community Centre for asking me to speak today. I bring greetings, and best wishes, from the Senate of Canada.

I'm sure everyone has heard of the saying "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach", but I say that the way to everyone's heart is through the stomach! I bet all of us here today enjoy good food, and the fun of cooking.

Welcome to the launch of "Tasting Diversity: a celebration of immigrant women and their cooking". Not only is it full of mouth-watering recipes, "Tasting Diversity" supports a very good cause, the Working Women Community Centre (WWCC). I would like to thank all those involved in putting this cookbook together, all the individuals who have contributed recipes, and especially, Marcie Ponte, without whom we would not be here today.

I feel very honoured to have been asked to be a participant in this unique cookbook, and I would like to congratulate the Working Women Community Centre on this initiative. The Centre has helped newcomers to Canada find their place in the community for over 26 years. It does this by providing immigrant women with real opportunities to improve their lives, and it is not an exaggeration to say that this Centre has helped thousands of women to land on their feet in Canada, and take off running.

Like the many immigrant women who have benefitted from the services of the Working Women Community Centre, the immigrant women featured in Tasting Diversity have their unique stories of arrival and settlement in Canada. Within the pages of this book, we share our stories, and like women friends everywhere, we also share our recipes.

Today, we are not only here to launch a book, we are also here to celebrate immigrant women. In Canada, being a land of immigrants, there isn't a better way for us to learn about each other's cultures than to start with food. No matter how long ago we left our home countries, the taste and smell of our childhoods will always remain with us. I'm sure we all have

our comfort foods for when we don't feel well, and these are also the foods we used to have as children. That's what makes each of us who we are.

Here in Toronto, we have an amazing number of cultures, and so we are privileged to have a vast array of tastes. A number of these cultures are represented in this book, and I hope, as a result of sampling these recipes, I will get to know not only the food, but also the people who created these recipes.

I understand that thousands of these books have already been pre-sold, and thousands more are now being reprinted. It is marvelous to know that so many people will soon be tasting the diversity of our great multicultural city – Toronto.