

Speech by Senator Vivienne Poy

**Kaleidoscope: a mosaic in motion
A Fundraiser for the International Centre of Winnipeg**

May 3, 2008

Mrs. Shirley Chang, Hon. Guests and friends:

It is always nice to be back in Winnipeg, and to see so many of my friends here. Thank you for inviting me to celebrate, with you, sixty years of service to newcomers by the International Centre.

The Centre now serves clients from over 75 different ethnic backgrounds – a true kaleidoscope created by Canada's cultural mosaic. This diversity, I am sure, does present a unique challenge.

Like many communities in Canada, Manitoba recognizes the importance of attracting immigrants. You have an active Provincial Nominee program that reaches out to communities around the world. The number of workers who immigrated to Manitoba under this and other programs has grown steadily to about 10,000 in 2006, and this number is expected to double over the next decade.

Since 2001, Manitoba has grown increasingly diverse. Over the last few years, you have attracted a large number of Asians and Africans through your welcoming program. In particular, there is a large and growing population of Filipinos. It is the 3rd largest Filipino community in the country, accounting for over 5% of the total population of Winnipeg in the last Census (2006). No wonder the community is so active here. I understand that the next largest groups of visible minorities are South Asians, and Blacks. Visible minorities now represent 15% of the total population of Winnipeg, and the ninth highest amongst the metropolitan areas in Canada.

Given this diversity, it is no surprise that there is an active Asian Heritage Month celebration here, and since it is the beginning of May, I would like to invite everyone to consult Manitoba's Asian Heritage Month

website to support the many events that are happening throughout the month.

For new immigrants arriving in Manitoba on a daily basis, the International Centre of Winnipeg is an essential resource. It guides them through many hurdles, eg. orientation, language, jobs, assessment of qualifications, education, culture shock, about your sunny sky and notoriously cold winters.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Centre of Winnipeg for all your efforts to support newcomers to the province over the past 60 years, and wish you continuous success for many years to come.

Thank you.