



CANADA

# Debates of the Senate

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2nd SESSION

•

36th PARLIAMENT

•

VOLUME 138

•

NUMBER 30

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## ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

**Bestowal by University of Toronto  
of Honorary Doctoral Degree**

**Statement by:**

**The Honourable Vivienne Poy**

**Tuesday, February 22, 2000**

## THE SENATE

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### SENATORS' STATEMENTS

#### ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

BESTOWAL BY UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
OF HONORARY DOCTORAL DEGREE

**Hon. Vivienne Poy:** Honourable senators, I am pleased to report that, last Tuesday, I had the honour to attend the convocation ceremony at the University of Toronto for the awarding of an honorary Doctorate of Laws degree to Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Honourable senators, I know that none of you need an introduction to Archbishop Tutu. A Nobel Peace Prize laureate, a giant of humanitarianism, Archbishop Tutu is a living symbol of the triumph of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. Accused of being a terrorist by the apartheid regime in his homeland, this man of peace repeatedly risked imprisonment for his advocacy of sanctions against South Africa by the international community. Desmond Tutu condemned the use of violence by apartheid opponents and has consistently sought a peaceful, negotiated reconciliation between the black and white communities.

I regret, honourable senators, that my words simply cannot convey the depth of emotion in the Great Hall of Hart House at the University of Toronto. In what I can describe only as an overwhelmingly moving speech, Archbishop Tutu spoke with

humility and humour. He urged the audience to acknowledge humanity's extraordinary capacity for forgiveness.

Over the last few years, the world has watched events unfold in South Africa, as it has made the transition from apartheid to a truly democratic government. The South African belief of "Ubuntu" — the essence of being human — far outweighs the way most of the world deals with conflicts: by anger, force and revenge.

Archbishop Tutu was the chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, where perpetrators of some of the most heinous crimes were given amnesty in exchange for a full disclosure of the facts and the offences. We now know that there is a viable option for the rest of the world in dealing with long-standing disputes.

Honourable senators, the archbishop declared that forgiveness is the only way to end bloodshed and sectarian strife, and make possible a new beginning. Only along the path of restorative justice — not retribution and revenge — can we recognize the essence of our common humanity and find true healing and meaningful reconciliation.

Honourable senators, we in Canada have much to learn from Archbishop Tutu in his lesson of humanity, reconciliation and communal harmony, as we seek to build a more compassionate, tolerant and multicultural Canada.

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