

The Simons Foundation
Award for Distinguished Global Leadership in the Service
of Peace and Disarmament

Dinner in Honour of
The Honourable Madame Louise Arbour, C.C., G.O.C.

Welcome Remarks

Rosewood Hotel Georgia
Vancouver, BC
March 19th, 2015

Jennifer Allen Simons, C.M., Ph.D., LL.D.
President
The Simons Foundation

Good Evening,

My name is Jennifer Allen Simons and I am President of The Simons Foundation. Here tonight from the Foundation are Board members, Tom Simons and Paul Lowry; Peter Walton who is one of our Advisors; Foundation Senior Fellow, Former Ambassador Paul Meyer; my Assistant and Programme Manager Elaine Hynes and Financial Officer, Mary Lum.

On behalf of the Foundation I want to welcome you, and thank you, for joining us in a dinner to celebrate The Honorable Louise Arbour, internationally renowned pre-eminent jurist, who will tonight accept The Simons Foundation Award for Distinguished Global Leadership in Peace and Disarmament.

I welcome Andrew Petter, President of Simon Fraser University, and also Professor John Pierce who was instrumental in the establishment of the two Simons Chairs in International Law and Human Security. I imagine that John will remember that he asked me who I envisioned as the Ideal Chair and I responded “Louise Arbour” ! And now you are here!

I want to thank Professor Alec Dawson, Director of Simon Fraser’s School for International Studies, who has worked in partnership with me to develop and organize the conference we are in the midst of. We are very happy with our working partnerships with Simon Fraser University. And we believe it is of benefit to both organizations.

This year is the 30th Anniversary of The Simons Foundation. It is highly appropriate that Simon Fraser University and The Simons Foundation work together because I established the Foundation when I was in Graduate School at Simon Fraser.

And the first grant was for a doctoral scholarship for a woman entering science at Simon Fraser University because there were no women on the faculty in Physics. I admit it was a sexist appointment. And I imagined that a woman physicist, researching radiation and the atom, would be a Marie Curie, using her knowledge of atomic physics and radioactivity to alleviate suffering, rather than an Edmund Teller, the so-called father of the Hydrogen Bomb.

The Simons Foundation is a working foundation as well as a granting entity. Our policy and practice has been to work, and to provide grants for projects and programmes, in areas which don’t receive enough attention.

Our inspiration comes from poet Alfred Lord Tennyson’s *Ulysses – Come My Friends, ‘tis not too late to seek a newer world!*

We aspire to a create better world of equality and justice for human beings, to promote peace, global co-operation - diplomacy and rule of law rather than the resort to weapons and war.

We have active programmes in Arctic Security, Space Security, Disarmament Education, Nuclear Disarmament; and International Law and Human Security, specifically related to Nuclear Disarmament and the Prevention of Genocide.

In this area of International Law and Human Security – the focus of our work this week - as well as the endowments for the two Simon Fraser University Simons Chairs in International Law and Human Security, the Foundation has participated in the conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons hosted by the governments of Norway, Mexico and Austria. And we are pleased to welcome here the Consul General of Norway, Mr. Stein Gudmundseth; and the Consul General of Mexico, Senora Claudia Franco Hijuelos.

These Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons are addressing the legality of nuclear weapons under existing international law. And, currently 157 states are participating in the conferences.

As well, we fund an organization which is part of a working group in support of the Government of Mexico's Resolution for Amendment of article 8 (b) of the International Criminal Court Rome Statute to include *the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons* as a war crime.

The Simons Foundation is also a member of the International Coalition for the International Criminal Court; and was the Canadian private funder for the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, the Report "The Responsibility to Protect."

The Foundation funded the research for Senator Romeo Dallaire when he was Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. And I am a member of Steering Committee of the Montreal Institute for Genocide Studies Will to Intervene Project, which we also fund.

Madame Louise Arbour is here to hold the Simons Visiting Chair in Dialogue on International Law and Human Security. This week, she is chairing a conference on International Criminal Justice: The State of Play, co-convened by Simon Fraser's School for International Studies and The Simons Foundation.

In this room tonight are eminent Jurists, scholars and experts from around the globe seeking to strengthen International Criminal Justice Law in order to ensure that no one – from President to peon – is immune from prosecution from crimes against humanity and mass atrocities for which they are responsible.

Louise Arbour is the ideal recipient for The Simons Foundation Award for many reasons but specifically for her contributions as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and as Chief Prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda. She has played an important leadership role in shaping both institutions.

The Presentation of the Award will take place after the main course, and following the presentation, Madame Arbour will speak to us.

Before we begin our dinner I would like to thank Elaine Hynes for her excellent organization of this evening. Elaine will you please come forward.

Enjoy your dinner.