

Citizenship Ceremony – March 23, 2016

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good morning. Thank you for inviting me to be a part of this wonderful ceremony today.

I'd like to begin by recognizing everyone for being here for this very special event. Many thanks to Ms. Billie Gene Dufresne for presiding over the ceremony and administering the oath of citizenship to our new citizens. Thank you as well to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Sault Community Career Centre, and our Local Immigration Partnership for organizing and hosting the ceremony.

I've been fortunate enough to participate in several citizenship ceremonies now as Mayor. I am always glad to be able to take part, and to have the chance to see the Canadian family grow.

To the friends and family of those who swore the oath today, my sincere thanks for being here to show your support. Becoming Canadian is a very meaningful occasion, and I am glad you are here to share in it, and to celebrate it, with your friends and loved ones.

And of course, most importantly of all, to our new Canadians, thank you for being here. Thank you for making the decision to become members and participants in Canadian society in the fullest way possible.

Most of us are Canadian citizens by birth. As such, we sometimes take our country and all that it has to offer for granted. We take for granted the rights and privileges that our citizenship bestows on us.

But if you have taken the oath today, it is much different. Because you have elected by choice to join the Canadian family. And in doing so, you are affirming your belief in this country, its institutions, and its principles. You are affirming your belief in our society and your desire to contribute to it.

The great thing about choosing to become Canadian is that you don't lose part of your identity by doing so; instead you add to it. The strength of our society lies in its diversity. I encourage you all to continue to share your cultural traditions and your heritage with us. Because in doing so, you will help enrich and strengthen our community here in Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding area, and also Canada as a whole.

So once again, on behalf of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, thank you to everyone for being here today and congratulations to our newest Canadians for completing your journey to become citizens of this great nation.

Thank you.