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COLIN ROBERTSON

CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT TO
ORDER OF THE AZTEC EAGLE

Statement by:

The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Thursday, May 11, 2017

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CONGRATULATIONS ON APPOINTMENT TO ORDER OF THE AZTEC EAGLE

Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, it is always praise for Canada when a Canadian is awarded an international tribute.

At a special ceremony last week, His Excellency Agustin Garcia-López, Mexican Ambassador to Canada, presented Colin Robertson with the Order of the Aztec Eagle, the highest honour the Government of Mexico can bestow on a foreigner. Maureen Boyd, Colin's wife was also honoured.

My pride in witnessing this presentation was huge. My heartiest congratulations and thanks go to Colin and Maureen for their commitment and ongoing international work for Canada. This honour is especially timely, marking a particularly positive commitment between partners when the future of NAFTA is in question and the need to retain relationships so important.

Colin Robertson has long been heralded for his knowledge and insights into Canada's place in the world. Personally, watching Colin's career evolve over the years has been a treat. My husband gave him his first job in the Manitoba Archives when Colin was a University of Manitoba undergraduate. He worked with the then recent transfer of the Hudson's Bay Archives from London, and joined us for many dinners and TV specials.

A Canadian diplomat for 30 years, Colin is now Vice President and Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute; an Executive Fellow at the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy; and Distinguished Senior Fellow at Carleton's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs. He sits on many advisory councils, including the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, and the North American Research Partnership. An Honorary

Captain of the Royal Canadian Navy, assigned to the Strategic Communications Directorate, he is also on the Deputy Minister of International Trade's NAFTA Advisory Council. You will have read his regular columns on foreign affairs in *The Globe and Mail*.

His understanding of the importance of cultural diplomacy is deep, unwavering in support for arts and culture as a critical tool for Canada's goals and profile abroad. That was evident when he was Cultural Attaché in New York, in the Canadian mission in Hong Kong, at the UN, Consul General in Los Angeles, and the first Head of the Advocacy and Legislative Secretariat at the Canadian Embassy in Washington.

He has supported many international cultural exchanges involving Canadian creators, musicians, dancers, writers, exhibitions and performing arts groups. Canada-Mexico artistic relationships are long-standing. Mexico's Frida Kahlo and our own Emily Carr have been featured in major international exhibitions. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet recently performed in Mexico and Canada's National Gallery has a number of exhibitions in the final planning stages.

[Translation]

Honourable colleagues, I very much want to thank to our friend, Colin Robertson, this visionary diplomat who contributed so much to Canada, and congratulate him on this honourable distinction that he was awarded.

[English]

Colin Robertson, a consummate diplomat, is a champion for Canada of whom we should all be proud. He is a silent hero who has worked tirelessly over many decades to advance the interests of Canadians while respecting those of our international partners.