



## Remarks by the Honourable Janet Austin, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia for the Provincial Commemorative Service for Queen Elizabeth II

Chiefs and Elders... Premier Horgan... Justices... Ministers and Members of the Legislative Assembly... veterans and serving members... many distinguished guests... friends all.

As always, I wish to acknowledge the Lekwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt, upon whose traditional territory we gather today and to thank them for sharing these lands in peace and friendship. Hay'swx'qa Siem.

It is with immense sadness that we gather today to mourn the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

She dutifully served for seven decades, always with dignity, grace, and unwavering devotion to her people.

Her Majesty's constant presence touched many generations of Canadian families, who watched her grow from the teenage Princess who trained as a mechanic during WWII, to the young Queen who charmed crowds on her many tours throughout the country, and to her family roles as mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother many times over.

On the eve of her Coronation, she affirmed her commitment to a life of service with these words: "I have in sincerity pledged myself to your service, as so many of you are pledged to mine. Throughout all my life and with all my heart, I shall strive to be worthy of your trust."

Her Majesty kept her word, and kept faith with her people for all the ensuing years.

Her abiding dedication to the people of the Commonwealth earned her the respect and affection of Canadians. She in turn loved Canada dearly, a sentiment she expressed to me personally during my audience with her, upon being appointed Lieutenant Governor.

At that time, she shared with me fond memories of her travels to Canada and British Columbia, her pleasure in Government House and its beautiful grounds, and her gratitude for the care taken on her behalf. And she thoughtfully inquired after the "Friends" of Government House, our loyal cadre of 450 volunteers, by whose continuous care the gardens are maintained, museums are operated, and tours are conducted for the enjoyment of all.



Her Majesty has been a constant and steady presence in the lives of Canadians, just as our constitutional monarchy is a stabilizing characteristic in the governance of our country that links us outward to the Commonwealth, and connects us to a tradition of parliamentary democracy and equality before the law. Yet it has also accommodated important reforms, such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Similarly, Her Majesty adapted her role to evolving social norms. She acknowledged and celebrated religious diversity, recognized the importance of communication and outreach, and embraced the use of technology to bring the monarchy into the modern era.

Our Queen gave us a symbol of constancy, grace, and self-sacrifice. She gave us a symbol of female power, and of restrained self-governing authority. The qualities we associate with Her Majesty— civility, adherence to duty and thoughtful restraint— are perhaps under-valued in the contemporary world. But they are qualities that, if more generally emulated and esteemed, would greatly benefit the world in general.

Her Majesty's life, lived in the public eye, made us all witness to the universal touchstones of human life— birth... marriage... parenthood... ageing... and death— and connects us to our common humanity. Her passing represents the end of an era defined by its longevity, by her example of service, and by the kindness and consideration she showed to everyone.

I have been deeply touched by the outpouring of genuine grief expressed by so many British Columbians, and I know that I am joined by all of you in the immense sorrow I feel on the passing of our most beloved Queen.

Wasn't she marvellous!

Like his mother, and throughout his life, His Majesty King Charles III has also demonstrated his dedication to public service, through his early naval career, his extensive patronage of more than 400 organizations, and by his earnest commitment to environment and sustainability, to education, and to the empowerment of young people.

I feel great alignment with these interests and look forward to continuing to support this work in my role as Lieutenant Governor.



And I've been heartened by His Majesty's conversation yesterday with our Governor General, Her Excellency Mary May Simon, during which he expressed his desire to work towards a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples.

As we now pledge allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, King of Canada, his heirs and successors, and I know am joined by all of you in wishing him strength and courage in fulfilling the duties of the Crown.

Long Live the King!

The Honourable Janet Austin  
Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia  
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