

SPEAKING NOTES

**The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate**

**On the occasion of the Presentation of the Distinguished Service Award and
Welcome Back to the Hill Reception
For the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians**

June 7, 2010

Speaker Milliken,
Honourable Parliamentarians, past and present,
Distinguished guests,
Friends and family:

It is my pleasure, as Speaker of the Senate, to welcome you to today's award ceremony. To those who are returning to Parliament Hill after being absent for some time, I want to offer a particularly warm welcome.

Regardless of the chamber in which you served, you all recognized the importance of public service. From the beginning of your journeys in political life to the present, you have contributed to the well-being of our nation. That continues through your membership and work with the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians and other organizations.

There are few countries where the practice of freedom has been so widely enjoyed throughout history. Canada is one. While there have been stumbles along the way, Canada would not have enjoyed such a high level of freedom without parliamentarians dedicated to the public good.

This is not to suggest that we will all agree on what constitutes the public good at any given moment. Disagreements are legend and are a key component to the fire of debate which is such a critical component of every democracy. These disagreements extend not just to the definition but to the means by which to achieve the public good. However, there is no doubt, I would even risk saying there can be no disagreement, that each of us came to this place to serve to the best of our ability.

Earlier today, we remembered our friends and former colleagues who left us in the past year. This afternoon we single out two individuals to honour among the many exceptional people whose accomplishments continue to do us proud. The Distinguished Service Award was created to give recognition for outstanding contributions to the promotion and understanding of Canada's parliamentary system of government. This year the award goes to Mr. Keith Penner for his commitment to the Association.

In closing, public service is a noble calling. Everyone who has served in parliament answered the call when stepping forth on the journey that eventually led to the Senate, to the House of Commons, or, in some cases, to both. Each of you continues to answer that call today as a member of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians. May you all continue to serve the public in one way or another for years to come.

Thank you