

**SPEAKING NOTES
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF A CEREMONY TO AWARD THE ORDRE DE LA
PLÉIADE**

**237-C
MARCH 21, 2011**

Mr. Speaker of the House of Commons,
Ambassadors,
Minister,
President and members of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie,
Honourable senators and members of Parliament,
Distinguished recipients,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Parliament of Canada as we honour the recipients of the Ordre de la Pléiade. It was not so long ago that I was on this podium, honoured to receive the rank of Grand Officier. Today I am here with you to celebrate the French language and to congratulate its advocates and standard-bearers.

Let me thank the Canadian Branch of the APF and its president, my colleague in the Senate and friend, the Honourable Andrée Champagne, for holding this ceremony that recognizes the French fact in Canada. I would also like to thank those who submitted nominations for this prestigious honour of the Francophonie.

Today, you are being welcomed into the pantheon of cultural dialogue and the Francophonie alongside a number of our fellow Canadians who have taken up the cause of the French language and upheld the Francophonie's ideals of cooperation and friendship.

The Pléiade refers to the seven daughters of the Titan Atlas from Greek mythology, the seven French poets of the 16th century and Gallimard's prestigious collections. In awarding you the Ordre de la Pléiade, the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie is honouring the memory of the Francophonie's great poets and

writers. It is recognizing your efforts to preserve and strengthen the French language in everyday life and in Parliament, thereby promoting the values that it holds dear.

Across Canada, as in my home province of New Brunswick, the coexistence of French and English presents challenges in all aspects of life. However, the Pléiade's symbolism, whether it comes from Greek mythology or French poetry, is an inspiration as we work to protect and promote the French language.

The Pléiades also symbolize peace, which, together with democracy, justice and human rights, is one of the fundamental values of the Francophonie. These values are important to me personally, and I know that you will continue to promote them, each of you in your own field, so that these values transcend cultures and borders.

Again, congratulations to all the recipients, and thank you for your tireless contributions to the vitality of the French language. Welcome to the Ordre de la Pléiade.