

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF A RECEPTION MARKING THE
RETIREMENT OF THE HONOURABLE ANDRÉE CHAMPAGNE, P.C.**

**SPEAKER'S CHAMBERS
JUNE 17, 2014**

Senator Champagne,
Honourable Senators and Members of the House of Commons,
Friends and Family,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Senate and to the historic chambers of the Speaker of the Senate where we are gathered to mark the impending departure of the Honourable Andrée Champagne from these storied environs.

The tributes in the Senate Chamber this afternoon provided a good indication of the outstanding quality of her service to the Senate over the past nine years. Hers has been a rich parliamentary and public career, fascinating and culturally vibrant.

When Senator Champagne first decided to enter politics in 1984, she was already a household name in her home province of Quebec for her accomplishments as a pianist, actress, singer, writer and director. In addition to her extensive contributions to Canadian television, radio, film and theatre, she has been involved in numerous arts and culture organisations, including service on the Board of *l'Institut québécois du cinéma*, playing a leading role in recognition and rights for Canadian artists as Vice-President of *l'Union des artistes*, and creating

the innovative programme *Le Ches Nous des Artistes*, a retirement home specifically for artists and the first of its kind in Canada.

This passionate and dedicated commitment to cultural initiatives and to increasing support and resources for artists led to frequent interactions with government. Rather than routinely calling politicians, she found a more direct way to get things done. Senator Champagne was overwhelmingly elected as a Member of Parliament in September 1984, and began her parliamentary career in what we in the Senate refer to as “the other place”.

Within two weeks of arriving in the House of Commons, she was sworn to the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and was appointed Minister of State for Youth — rising through the ranks with the kind of velocity and energy that a pianist such as the good Senator might refer to as “*prestissimo!*” Within six years, she became Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons, the first woman to hold that office, as well as Chair of Committees of the Whole. The 1993 election was a temporary loss for politics and a gain for culture, with the Senator returning to arts and culture initiatives, and sharing insights from her decades of service by publishing what is perhaps one of the best-titled political autobiographies of all time, *Champagne pour Tout le Monde*.

Talent cannot be kept waiting too long in the wings and in 2005 the Honourable Andrée Champagne returned to Parliament, to great applause, for a second act. She quickly established herself as a dynamic and powerful presence in the Senate, including regular service on the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and serving as Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Official Languages for the past 7 years.

Throughout her time in the Senate she has been a passionate advocate for language rights in Canada and abroad. Her appointment as a Commander of the Order of La Pléiade, one of the highest honours in francophone culture, is testament to the quality of her work and she continues to tirelessly pursue this mandate as International President of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

Even though we are sad to say farewell to such a devoted and talented individual, there is one group who will be pleased to be able to spend more time with her. Senator, please allow me to extend our most sincere thanks to your partner André-Sébastien, your son Patrick and daughter Liliane, and your granddaughter, and all the other members of your family, for generously sharing you with us for these many years.

Senator Champagne, when you delivered your maiden speech to the Senate on November 22, 2005, you made an intelligent and eloquent case for greater inter-parliamentary cooperation against terrorism. The record, however, indicates that your speaking time expired just as you approached the crescendo of an important point and your request to be allowed to continue was not granted by the Chamber. It is my pleasure now, after your nine years of Senate service and an eighteen-year parliamentary career, to invite you to the podium with the promise that an extension of time will be forthcoming on this occasion, should you seek it.

Thank you.