

Peter Allard's Allard Prize Ceremony Speech - October 1, 2015

Honoured and distinguished guests,

It is a thrill to be here tonight to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the University of British Columbia, in tandem with the ceremony awarding the second biennial Allard Prize for International Integrity. This evening we are recognizing and honouring those from around the world who most strongly exemplify courage and leadership in fighting some of the most systemically corrupt systems of our political, economic and legal institutions.

Worldwide, transparency and accountability are diminishing, and in many cases, are completely absent. This is largely due to the censoring or suppression of freedom of expression - a simple evil that surrounds us every day. It is motivated by self-interest, greed and the ever-growing

self-entitlement of those who unjustly want more, to the exclusion of all others.

The Allard Prize strives to recognize, and tell the stories of, courageous leaders around the world who are fighting this blatant tide of immorality of spirit and actions against our fellow citizens.

Our honourees this evening - John Githongo of Kenya, Indonesia Corruption Watch, the late Sergei Magnitsky of Russia and Rafael Marques de Morais of Angola - are powerful and selfless beacons of light in the struggle to ensure that honesty and truth prevail, for the benefit of all of us. They are an integral part of the constant battle to establish and maintain transparency, accountability and the Rule of Law, to ensure that basic human rights, equality and dignity of the individual are recognized throughout the world.

In presenting their stories in the short video you are about to see, the Allard Prize seeks to inspire all of us, in big ways and small, to effect positive change.

Among others, we want young law students about to enter the legal profession to see and feel the negative effects of the corruption of our legal and judicial systems, at the expense of all of our democratic principles providing fair, impartial and accessible legal processes. By telling the stories of our courageous honourees, we want the Prize to help positively alter the fundamental way we treat each other.

My heartfelt thanks go out to our honourees, for the sacrifices they have made and are making, and for inspiring in all of us the courage and leadership to tell the truth, and to refuse to be bought.

My thanks also go out to the Allard Prize Committee and the Allard School of Law, who diligently administer the Prize, including the selection process, and to the Advisory Board for its important contributions.

I urge all of us, and especially law students, lawyers and judges around the world, to be inspired by the stories of our honourees, and to work to restore and protect our democratic principles through ensuring that legislation with the necessary checks and balances is in place everywhere, and that it is actively enforced. I also urge all new law students to become and remain vigilant and actively engaged in every level of our legal regulatory systems, law organizations, and law societies, both on the political and economic sides, to spark resolutions and positive change at every possible moment, by exposing and remedying abuses of power that exact a heavy toll on every world citizen.

There is an urgent, perilous, constant and growing threat. Each of us needs to stand up, speak up and take action, to effect positive change wherever we can, however we can, each and every day.