

## UPF and WFWP Canada: Toronto Peace Ambassador Awards Honor Women

David Stewart  
October 26, 2024



**Toronto, Canada** – The annual UPF-Toronto Ambassadors for Peace (AFP) Awards Banquet, this year co-hosted by Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), turned into quite an evening at the J and J Swagat Convention Centre in Markham, Ontario on Saturday, October 26, 2024. With the theme, "Honoring Women," the full hall of almost 200 was captivated by the words of this year's award winner, **Dr. Dawn Wabmemee Lavell-Harvard**, a life-long advocate and worker for Indigenous peoples' rights, and the keynote speaker, **Ms. Kaeleigh Moffitt**, president of WFWP-United States.



The evening was guided by MCs **Mr. David Stewart** of UPF-Canada and 20-year-old **Ms. Victorieuse Sambao**, who received a warm round of applause at the program's conclusion. Ms. Sambao started by inviting 80-year-old **Rev. Yvette Shank**, long-time president of the Church of Scientology in Canada, to

offer the Land Acknowledgement. She was followed by local 9th grade student **Mee Young Gabriel** singing the national anthem. Ms. Gabriel returned to sing during dinner together with 8-year-old Ukrainian singing sensation **Zlata Barchuk**, 16-year-old **Antoinette Targa**, and **Nicolas Manlapaz**, 17. The youthful Top Gun dance team added to the wonderful entertainment throughout the evening.



**Dr. Moonshik Kim**, chairman of UPF-Canada, spoke of the AFP network, and added that by honoring women we were honoring Mother Moon, co-founder of both UPF and WFWP. Congratulatory letters from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and local MP Paul Chiang were shared. During the evening, local councillor **Ms. Juanita Nathan** and local MPP **Ms. Laura Smith** greeted all very warmly. **Ms. Lilly Tadin**, president of WFWP Canada, delved into the "essence of womanhood," the different perspectives of men and women, and highlighted some of the remarkable achievements of WFWP in its 32-year history.



There followed a surprise addition to the program where previous recipients of the APF Service Award, **Mr. Nadarajah Moorthy** and **Mr. Henry Lee**, spoke of the importance of women in their lives. They were followed by retired **Major Don Kennedy** speaking of his respect, honor and love for his wife, Hoo

Jung, who was one of last year's awardees, as she stood beside him on stage.

An interfaith prayer was offered by **Dr. Ratnasabapathy Thillairajan**, uniting everyone in a moment of spiritual reflection, preceding an Indian dinner that was enjoyed by all. The excellent food, conversation and entertainment were followed by a very moving video, "Chosen," showing vignettes of the lives of Father and Mother Moon.



In Ms. Kaeleigh Moffitt's profound keynote address, "The Missing Piece in Peacebuilding," she spoke of her course in peace studies, and how the successful example of reconciliation in South Africa led by peace activist Mr. Nelson Mandela, who, as she said, "had no reason to trust" South African President F. W. de Klerk, is sadly unique in that field of study. This led her to think about the reasons for this, and what was missing. Ms. Moffitt's insight into the missing piece came from her study of Mother Moon's memoir, and the explanation of the process she and her husband went through prior to meeting their "enemy," North Korean President Kim Il Sung, in 1991.



Ms. Moffitt read directly from the memoir about the need to forgive: "Before setting foot in North Korea, we had to resolve any painful feelings knotted up in our hearts. We had to forgive Kim Il Sung, whose regime had hurt the nation and world, not to mention our extended family and ourselves ... Only in the position of his parents, only with the heart of his mother, could I forgive." Ms. Moffitt concluded by identifying three keys to peacebuilding: the need for a selfless, altruistic global perspective; structural elements and the application of true love; the need for the capacity to embrace all peoples and circumstances with a parental heart.

This speech set the stage for the Service Award winner, Dr. Dawn Waubmemee Lavell-Harvard, who has followed in the footsteps of her mother, Mrs. Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, as president of both the Ontario and Canada Native Women's Associations, both dedicated to creating the context for reconciliation in Canada by promoting the rights of Indigenous peoples. Dr. Lavell-Harvard had prepared a short video about her life, her "journey for justice." Given that her mother took a case to the Supreme Court and won,

she had thought that "all mums held fundraisers and coordinated protests; that all women marched in the streets and banged on doors in Parliament."

After receiving her award, Dr. Lavell-Harvard, now the director for First Peoples House of Learning at Trent University, told stories from her life of working to lessen the pain, heartbreak and suffering of the families of lost and murdered Indigenous women and girls. She shared with the totally quiet and attentive audience the small victories, the breakthroughs in mutual understanding, and the hope she sees for the future after her 50 years of dedication and service. She could honestly proclaim that, "I may not like you, but I do love you" as her life's testimony.



The evening ended with the appointment of 11 new AFPs, including several prominent members of the Canadian Multi-Cultural Council, which was well represented, as was the Senior Tamils Society of Peel. Almost all the participants lingered to take photos, meet, greet, renew friendships and network. It was a memorable evening for all.