

Introduction of Karen McCrimmon

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence

Canadian Military and Veteran Families Leadership Circle

SECOND ANNUAL MEETING, OTTAWA, ONTARIO - JANUARY 29, 2016

Introduction delivered by

Victor Duret, Vanier Institute of the Family Board Chair

Good morning and welcome!/Bonjour et bienvenue!

My name is Victor Duret, I am the Chair of the Vanier Institute Board, and it is a pleasure to be a co-host for today's event.

It is my pleasure to introduce you to our special guest: Karen McCrimmon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, who will deliver the keynote address on behalf of the Honourable Kent Hehr, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence.

A Canadian Forces pioneer, Karen honed her leadership and team-building abilities in the service of her country, joining the Canadian Forces as a reservist.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Windsor, she transferred to the Regular Forces, where she quickly rose through the ranks. In 1981, she became an air navigator – the first woman to earn the qualification.

In 1998, she was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and appointed Commanding Officer of 429 Transport Squadron in Trenton, becoming the first woman to command a Canadian Forces flying squadron.

After retiring from the Canadian Forces in 2006, she started her own business offering mediation services to both public and private institutions.

She became involved in federal politics in 2008 and was elected as Member of Parliament for Kanata-Carleton in the recent election and, as noted, was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence.

It seems trite to say retired LCol McCrimmon understands Military Families – she was and is part of one, regardless of her current or future activities.

If I can quote from an interview she did:

"I thank everyone for stepping up to serve their country and all the families. All those years I was squadron commander or deployed or on mission, it was family that stepped up and made it so I could do something. That's the military families. They give so much, they sacrifice so much and I thank them for everything they've done, all members of all military families."

It is our honour and privilege to have you here with us this morning.