

Allard Hall Opening
23 September 2011
Professor Stephen J. Toope
President and Vice-Chancellor
The University of British Columbia

Thank you Mary Anne (Bobinski).

Madam Chief Justice of Canada, Your Honour (Lt. Governor of British Columbia), Madam Chancellor, Mr. Chair of the Board of Governors, distinguished jurists, colleagues and friends.

This may be the most overdue occasion in the history of UBC, and it is indeed one for unconstrained celebration.

When we first announced the successful completion of the building campaign back in July, an enthused member of our Development Office staff – a mother of two children – was overheard to make a playful, but profoundly appropriate remark:

“Now that we have the mortgage paid off, we can look after the kids!”

Having given that metaphor some thought, I’ve concluded that there may not be a better way to describe the point at which we have arrived today, or the special kind of levity it brings.

The kind of levity that is the result of knowing that we have overcome a significant financial challenge, and that the way is now clear to focus our attention on that which matters most. True, “the kids” in this case are

mostly young adults pursuing legal education and research, but you get the point.

To carry the metaphor just a step further, we've not only paid off the mortgage; we've paid off the mortgage on a dream home – one with everything the UBC Family of Law needs.

Forgive me if I sound like an over-enthusiastic realtor, but as a legal professor myself, I'm anxious for you to see the new place.

And when you do, I'm sure that it will become immediately obvious that Allard Hall provides a truly inspiring environment for study and collaboration. What may not be immediately obvious, however, is that it is also a comprehensive model of sustainability, one that meets LEED Gold standards.

I should perhaps mention that we've taken in some tenants. They're not just any tenants, mind you; they are two major law reform organizations – The BC Law Institute and the UN affiliated International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy. Besides, they had been in the old building for years, so it seemed heartless not to make room for them here, too. I am delighted with both of these partnerships.

In a few minutes you will all have an opportunity to see for yourself that Allard Hall is a home befitting one of Canada's leading centres for legal education and research, and one that aspires to even greater global influence. And it is from here that graduates will go on to leadership positions in a broad range of spheres, from the legal profession, to government, public interest organizations, business and academia.

With that in mind, I want to acknowledge all who contributed to the unprecedented success of this building campaign, and for making our dream home of Allard Hall a reality.

To the Law Foundation of BC, which laid the cornerstone by committing \$12 million in matching funds. That was a bold leap of faith and an expression of great foresight. Thank you to the Law Foundation (applause).

Thank you as well to:

- The leading law firms that provided major gifts;
- The hundreds of alumni and friends whose generosity further drove the campaign;
- The UBC staff who invested time, toil and passion;
- And finally - -

To Peter Allard, whose extraordinary generosity we today honour in name. Mr. Allard. I promised our Board of Governors that we would be able to convince a distinguished naming donor to have faith in this project. Thank you for making a truth-teller out of me. Your university is deeply grateful for your marvellous gift.

On behalf of the University of British Columbia, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all.

As for the new home, trust me, the kids love it – each and every one of us!