

## **Carole James**

Madam Chancellor, today I have the distinct honour of introducing Carole James a lifelong community activist and public servant.

There is a prehistoric instinct in the human species to protect those in danger, to soothe the distraught, to assist those in need.

Yet, as human society became more complex, and as population grew, we became less able to help those who were not immediately around us. Aid and support were facilitated through policy and through government. Structures were created to allow us to help large groups of people at one time.

In this capacity, Carole James has personified the role of caring, and diligent humanitarian.

She was a member of the legislative assembly for fifteen years, party leader of the New Democrats, Minister of Finance, and Deputy Premier.

By any objective measure she has been highly successful, and has reached the pinnacles of achievement in multiple domains.

Carole was raised as part of an activist community. Her mother walked the talk of helping those in need from conscientious objectors to the homeless, and Carole took it all in with mother's milk.

She was school board trustee and Chair of the Greater Victoria School Board providing education for the children of the day, the citizens of tomorrow.

She has been a central player in the institutions of parliamentary democracy, public education, and has always harboured a love of and lifelong connection to public libraries. Can you think of three institutions more devoted to the common good?

Her philosophy that everyone has something to offer, they just need to be given a chance has played out in classroom and legislature. She has been a foster parent to many children with special needs over the years, and was Director of the Carrier Sekani Child & Family Services in Northern B.C. She introduced many political initiatives to alleviate poverty over the years for the betterment of all society.

Carole James is the epitome of grace and humility in what we can refer to as leading by service. She was not a leader who sought the limelight, but a leader who sought to do what was right. Her lack of self-interest in taking credit is renowned; her concern was care for others not reward for herself.

In some ways, this is probably a good thing as the road to passing a bill, or changing cultural attitudes is not always smooth. There may be detours, even dead ends, but the intrepid traveller is never dismayed but continues on the journey.

On a hike, on a pilgrimage, we reconnect with nature, we find the thin places where we walk in two worlds. We trace the steps of those who have gone before us, and perhaps discover things about ourselves. As Paul Coelho said in his book *The Pilgrimage*, “We must never stop dreaming. Dreams provide nourishment for the soul, just as a meal does for the body.”

And as an avid hiker with an appreciation of the outdoors, Carole knows that such journeys fuel the walker to keep going, at times, against the wind, against the odds. In the words of Robert Macfarlane, “Paths are the habits of a landscape....paths connect. ..they relate places in a literal sense, and by extension they relate people....the mind is a landscape of a kind and walking a means of crossing it.”

Somehow, Carole James found the stamina to keep going one small step at time to achieve great advances for the common good.

I hope that as we stand here with her, looking back on the panorama of her accomplishments, we catch a glimpse of the footsteps of a kind, humble, decent person.

And we know that the path does not only reveal where we have come from, but shows us the way into the future. Thank you for showing us the way forward, Carole.

Madam Chancellor, I have the honour to present Carole Alison James for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.