

## WORD CULTURAL COUNCIL

Dear President **Deep Saini**

Dear Colleagues and Friends

It is a great pleasure for the **World Cultural Council** to celebrate its 39<sup>th</sup> Award Ceremony at **McGill University**, one of the leading seats of higher learning in Canada and, indeed, in the world. We are delighted to enhance our relations with institutions such as McGill through an auspicious event that underlies our common values and joint efforts directed toward the benefit of humankind.

These aims blend perfectly with the vision of the World Cultural Council, which seeks to contribute to a culture which brings to the peoples on this planet a feeling of well-being living in a world in which all differences are respected, coupled to cultures that promote progress and fulfil our lives with enriching experiences.

During the three years I lived in Canada, from early 1967 to the last few days of 1970, I had the great good fortune to visit McGill on numerous occasions. I am well aware of the historical reach of your university, which was founded over 200 years ago when McGill College was granted a royal charter as an institution of higher learning. I was delighted to be invited to the award ceremony but am, unfortunately, unable to attend for health reasons. I would nonetheless like to thank you again for hosting this event. I would like to express my gratitude to the university authorities and staff. I would also like to thank Aloha communications for sponsoring the World Cultural Council social media presence.

Tonight, we will recognize two outstanding role models. **Professor Eske Willerslev** has made pioneering discoveries in the field of evolutionary genetics during his highly fruitful and successful career. His work has helped us to gain a much better understanding of the origins, interactions, and adaptations of human population groups. For these achievements he has been selected as the winner of the **Albert Einstein World Award of Science 2024**.

**Cónal Creedon**, a novelist, short-story writer, playwright, documentary film maker, essayist, and collaborative artist, has been awarded the **Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts 2024**. His creative works have enlightened our appreciation of the human condition and constitute a significant contribution to the artistic legacy of creative expression.

These two prize winners, I do believe, represent ideally the objectives, the aims, and the aspirations of the World Cultural Council in its bid to recognise and to reward their achievements at the early stages of their academic careers.

We are also recognizing four highly promising young Canadian researchers, whose bold vision and hard work have set them, at a young age, on paths to push back boundaries in science and in the arts. May these young scholars, and, for that matter, all of us, be living models of the “creative intelligence and rich human qualities” emerging from university campuses, not only as competent professionals, but also as exemplary citizens with a deep sense of ethics.

It would have been an enormous pleasure for me to be with you to congratulate the laureates in person. By means of this message, I can, at least, send across the distance, from Hong Kong to Montreal, my whole-hearted best wishes and admiration.

Congratulations, Eske!

Congratulations, Cónal!

Cheers to the Young Talented Special Recognition scholars!

Thank you

Sir Fraser Stoddart

President

World Cultural Council