



Canadian Museum of
Immigration at Pier 21

Musée canadien de
l'immigration du Quai 21

PASSAGES WINTER 2022

COUNTLESS JOURNEYS. ONE CANADA.
TELL YOUR STORY. BUILD OUR COUNTRY.



Kim Thúy at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.



Lawrence Hill

CANADA'S STORYTELLERS INSPIRE

What makes authors Lawrence Hill and Kim Thúy remarkable is not accolades or awards, it's their humanity.

Before Omicron took hold in Canada, Kim Thúy was able to be on-site at the Museum in early December 2021, sharing her new novel, *Em*, and electrifying two audiences (one French, one English) with her sparkling wit, forthrightness, and enough warmth to heat our entire building for the winter. Initially, Lawrence Hill was also supposed to appear in person on January 11th, 2022 (the release date for his middle-grades novel *Beatrice and Croc Harry*), but the moving target of COVID meant we had to adapt. Instead, we presented his program on Zoom and, although nothing compares to being "in the room", his humour, generosity of spirit, and deep love of words were more infectious than any virus could be.

Kim Thúy and Lawrence Hill are giants of the literary scene. Hill's *The Book of Negroes* won the

Commonwealth Prize for Fiction and was adapted into a blockbuster miniseries. Thúy's debut novel, *Ru*, won the Governor General's Award for French-language fiction. Both have been *Canada Reads* champions. In addition to writing fiction for adults, Thúy is the author of a best-selling cookbook and *Beatrice and Croc Harry* marks Hill's first foray into children's literature. They are extremely busy people with multiple projects in development at any given time, and we were very fortunate to be able to host them as part of our *Canada's Storytellers* series.

No one embodies the spirit of *Canada's Storytellers* more than they do. They both live in the knowledge that to craft a narrative that truly resonates is to develop a deep comprehension of and empathy for people. They move through the world with curiosity, always seeking to understand who other humans are, always fascinated by the tales others tell, from the fantastical to the mundane. They prove that to be a great storyteller, you must first be a great

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Ours is a Museum of stories. Stories of people leaving behind a life and building a new one here in Canada. Stories of families visiting the Museum to stand in the spot where their parents and grandparents first stepped onto Canadian soil. Stories of Holocaust survivors and those who sheltered them. Stories of immigrants who became business leaders and philanthropists. And stories from some of this country's great authors, telling vital stories rooted in the diasporas of African and Vietnamese peoples.

The theme of this issue is "Inspired by..." The staff members who contributed articles were asked to write about some of the things that have inspired them this year at the Museum.

Beyond what is in this publication though, as we navigate wave after wave of the pandemic, I want to say how inspired I am by the creativity, tenacity and nimbleness of the team here to keep sharing stories through live online programming like our

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listener, and they listen: to the server in the diner, to their seatmates on airplanes, and to the fans that approach them at signings, clutching dog-eared, highlighted, well-loved copies of their books.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have been able to expand *Canada's Storytellers* to include narrative arts like flamenco and film. Still, there is something about books. Great works of fiction, and their authors, continue to be the beating heart of the series. Books are intimate in a way that other media simply aren't, bringing the reader into a world built using only words on a page and allowing the reader's mind to do the rest, creating an undeniable

Virtual Field Trips, Canada's Storytellers series, and the online Contributions experience. It is no small achievement to keep a Museum active and to continue to reach Canadians even as regulations ebb and flow with necessary Public Health measures.

I hope you're inspired by the stories in this issue. Inspired to give or to keep giving to the Museum. In telling the stories of immigrants to Canada, of what some have endured and what has been achieved, we help pave the road towards a more inclusive and welcoming Canada.

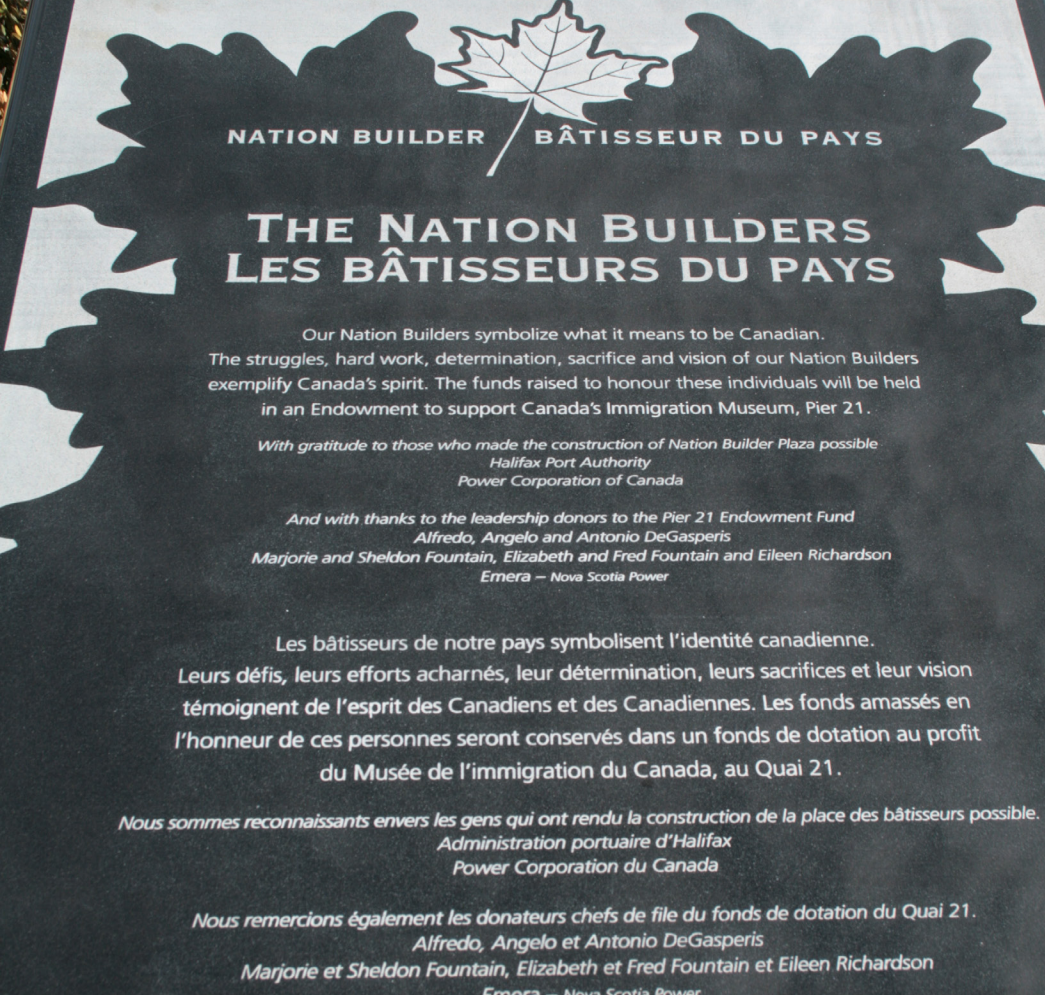
Thank you for your help in doing just that.

With warmest regards,

Marie Chapman,
Chief Executive Officer

bond between the work, the reader and the writer. And no one is better at bonding with readers than Lawrence Hill and Kim Thúy.

Rebecca MacKenzie-Hopkins,
Public Programs Manager



Left: Nation Builders plaque. Right: The late W. Galen Weston.

REMEMBERING A NATION BUILDER

In 2005, the Pier 21 Foundation launched the Nation Builders Endowment campaign to raise \$7 million. One million dollars was donated by, or in recognition of, each of the seven Nation Builders who have a connection to or an affinity for Pier 21.

In 2021, we lost one such Nation Builder, the late W. Galen Weston.

Born in 1940, the youngest of nine children, Weston came to Canada from England at age four. Little did anyone know that he would become a Canadian retail giant.

Weston struck out on his own, building a chain of grocery and department stores in Ireland before leading his family's North American business. With holdings in supermarkets, bakeries and merchandising, he was also president of the W. Garfield Weston Foundation, dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all Canadians.

Weston built an extraordinary legacy and we are indebted to his generosity and contribution to our country.

All donors play a vital role in supporting the life and work of the Museum. I was reminded of this at our

California Wine Dinner in October and again at our Pier 21 Club Holiday Social in December. It was very special to be able to gather in person with Museum supporters. At the December event, we were honoured to welcome celebrated Canadian author Kim Thúy. She noted that, thanks to our donors, stories that reflect her journey of fleeing Vietnam can be found at the Museum.

The story of Canada is built on countless journeys. We thank W. Galen Weston for his contribution as a Nation Builder, and we thank you, our dedicated supporters, for helping to share the ongoing and evolving story of our country.

Fiona Valverde,
Vice-President, Revenue Generation

Hungary is grateful to Canada for receiving large numbers of Hungarians and providing them with the freedom they yearned for.

The world's greatest philanthropists, proud of their commitment to family and fellowship, the Shriners are a brotherhood dedicated to providing care for children and families in need. This plaque honours their contributions and community service to help children in 22 hospitals across North America.

Les plus grands philanthropes du monde, fiers de leur engagement envers la famille et la camaraderie, les Shriners sont une fraternité dédiée à fournir des soins aux enfants et aux familles dans le besoin. Cette plaque souligne leurs contributions et leur service communautaire au service d'enfants dans 22 hôpitaux en Amérique du Nord.

Dedicated by the first Lebanese Canadian Potentate of the Philae Shriners of NS and PEI, Ill. Sir Bassam Nahas and Lady Linda.



League of Ukrainian Canadian Women
Ліга Українок Канади
La Ligue des Femmes
Ukrainiennes-Canadiennes

League of Ukrainian Canadians
Ліга Українців Канади
Ligue des Canadiens
Ukrainiens-Canadiens



Linda and Bassam Nahas in front of the Wadih M. Fares Wall of Tribute.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS SIR BASSAM NAHAS

I didn't know much about the Shriners. I had seen the clowns and fez-wearing men in tiny cars in parades, and I knew that they were involved in children's hospitals.

Thanks to a donation from Bassam Nahas, the Shriners are now recognized on the Museum's *Wadih M. Fares Wall of Tribute*. Bassam has a strong connection to both the Shriners and Pier 21, home of the Canadian Museum of Immigration.

Bassam Nahas arrived in Canada in 1967 through Pier 21 from the Lebanese city of Tripoli. He attended Saint Patrick's High School, carrying an Arabic-English dictionary to class while working two part-time jobs. In 1973 he became a citizen of Canada and completed his Bachelor of Science at Dalhousie. Since then, he has been successful in many fields including food services, land development, consulting, construction and importing/exporting.

Finding success in the business world, Bassam wanted to give back. In an oral history interview with the Museum¹, he talks about initially being involved in the United Way, then joining the Masons and working his way up through the ranks of the local Lodge, becoming

a member of the Grand Lodge, then becoming a Shriner, a fraternal and philanthropic organization.

In 2009, Bassam was made the first Lebanese Potentate of the region's Shriners Chapter, gaining the official title of "Illustrious Sir Bassam Nahas of the Potentate of the Shriners of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island." In his oral history interview, he describes this as "the [proudest] moment that I had." His unpaid work with the organization sometimes had him and his wife Linda away for five and a half months a year and brought him into contact with Shriners hospitals and patients. He is inspired by the work Shriners do with patients that include amputees, burn victims and children born with cleft palates.

Bassam decided to dedicate the newest plaque on the *Wadih M. Fares Wall of Tribute* to the Shriners, a fitting tribute to their work in the community.

Maria Almeida,
Donor Relations Manager

¹ Oral History with Bassam Nahas, (12.02.01BN)



Giovanna D'Alessandro (centre) revisits the site of her arrival with her daughter and granddaughter.

QUEEN FOR A DAY

Queen for a Day was a game show that ran from 1945 to 1964 bridging radio and television. I have vague images in my mind of housewives with crowns and flowers but I never actually saw it.

All this to say that my all-time favourite compliment is, "You made my mother feel like Queen for a Day". My colleague Maria Almeida and I received that cherished praise recently from Anna Jantos after her family's visit to the Museum.

Concezio and Giovanna D'Alessandro arrived at Pier 21 on April 28, 1959 aboard the *Giulio Cesare*. Concezio passed away in 2014 without having seen Pier 21 again. **Anna, their daughter, was determined to bring her mother back to where their Canadian story began.** Anna, her husband Joe, their daughter Samantha and fiancé Nick made a road trip from Ontario to Nova Scotia.

We started our tour at the new location of the *Sobey Wall of Honour* where people to whom the Museum holds great significance can make a donation of \$450 to have a physical plaque, which we call a "brick", installed. There on the gangway, the sea and sky are the only reflections on the wall. Anna surprised her

mother with a brick reading "Concezio and Giovanna D'Alessandro". When the cameras came out to capture the moment, Giovanna held a photograph of her beloved Concezio as all of us fought back tears.

Of her mother's visit, Anna later wrote:

"It brought back so much sadness of leaving family and friends behind but she feels she accomplished so much since arriving. The language barriers that she had to overcome and the fear of what the future would hold for her. She was very emotional talking about it... We asked her if she was happy overall of seeing Pier 21 and she couldn't stop thanking us. My mom is such a strong woman and it's all from what she had to live through to be here today. She's an amazing woman."

Maria and I met three amazing women that day. We're thankful to them all for letting us be part of their experience.

Carrie-Ann Smith,
Vice-President, Audience Engagement



David Korn is interviewed by Olga Milosevich at The Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK

As people able to share first-hand accounts of the Holocaust become fewer, **hearing directly from survivors is a treasured experience.**

This year we welcomed Holocaust survivor David Korn as a speaker. David was born in 1937. In 1942, he and his brother Jacob were left at an orphanage run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Slovakia. So many years on, David's voice still cracked with emotion when speaking of Pastor Kuna, who ran the orphanage and was charged with the care of seventy children, twenty-six of whom were Jewish.

The story of non-Jews hiding and caring for Jewish people during the Holocaust is extremely rare. In 1972 Pastor Kuna was given the title Righteous Among the Nations, an honour given by the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem to honour non-Jews who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Nazi era. In the 1990s, David reconnected with him and provided financial support for his care.

David shared his story in two Holocaust Education Week (HEW) events, one for the general public and the other an online event for schools that reached over 1,000 students.

Our HEW program ended with a keynote by anthropologist Erica Lehrer and an exhibition and artist-talk by Solomon Nagler and Angela Henderson. The exhibition, titled *All Flesh is Grass: A Multidirectional Post-Memorial*, maps untold histories and unmarked graves of Jewish victims of the Holocaust and was intentionally shown at the Museum to contextualize the Holocaust within a space that memorializes settler immigration on Turtle Island.

The presentation by Erica Lehrer, Solomon Nagler and Angela Henderson revealed a commitment to remember after our direct connection to the past is lost while acknowledging that there are troubling and neglected stories buried in the land we live on. David's story of Pastor Kuna, meanwhile, reminds us that those who risk their own safety to help those under threat are few and their contribution is immense.

Alexandra Cherry,
Public Programs and Digital Projects Coordinator

THE WORLD OF YOUSUF KARSH
A PRIVATE ESSENCE
NEW EXHIBITION IN MARCH 2022



PORTIA WHITE, 1946
© Estate of Yousuf Karsh

The Halifax exhibition is supported by Fred and Elizabeth Fountain.



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Musée canadien de l'immigration du Quai 21



An exhibition organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21.

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Mailing 201-1099 Marginal Rd, Halifax, NS B3H 4P7

    Pier21.ca



Donate To The Museum

Help us tell, honour and celebrate your story and write the next chapter in our Canadian history.

Yes! I want to support the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21

- With my donation of: \$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 \$2,100 Pier 21 Club membership Other \$
- I would like to give \$..... monthly on the 1st or 15th.
- I would like my gift to be in honour of in memory of:
- I would like my gift to remain anonymous.
- I have included the Museum in my will. I am considering a bequest and would like more information.

Yes! I want to dedicate a brick on the Sobeys Wall of Honour or Wall of Service

- \$450 *Sobey Wall of Honour* - to honour my family's immigration journey

Name(s) : First line
..... Second line

Please PRINT. Maximum 35 characters for both lines including spaces and commas. Person(s) name(s) only. No other information permitted.

- \$450 *Wall of Service* - to honour a current or former member of the Canadian military or a war bride

..... Rank/Name
..... Branch of Service/Regiment/War Bride

Please PRINT. Maximum 32 characters per line including spaces and punctuation. No other information permitted.

Donor(s) Information

Title(s): Donor(s) Name(s):

Mailing Address:

T: (.....)..... Email:

Method of Payment

- My enclosed cheque is made payable to the **Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21**
- Please charge my Visa MasterCard American Express the above amount indicated.

Cardholder's Name: Signature:

Card#:..... Expiry Date: / We will contact you to obtain your security code/CVV number.

Maria Almeida, Donor Relations Manager

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Thank you for your support!