

Mr. Chancellor, it is my pleasure to present to you Christine and Christian Fortin. Today we honor Christine and Christian Fortin for their work on behalf of the victims of HIV/AIDS and for their efforts to raise money to help fight this ravaging disease. Yet if you try to find out information about them, as I did researching for this introduction, you won't find out that much about them. You will find out that they live in North Bay, they are married and are parents. They experienced a great tragedy in their lives with the loss of one of their children. They are both runners and they support a charitable organization that raises money for HIV/AIDS. They are very special people, no doubt and that is about as much you can find out about them, and I suspect that is exactly the way they want it because they will likely view this honor as being bestowed upon them today as befitting someone else rather than themselves. What does happen when you search into the backgrounds of Christine and Christian Fortin is that you meet Patrick, and Patrick was truly a remarkable person. A person who had such an impact on the world that his parents Christine and Christian have transformed their lives and the lives of so many others because of the influence and example and courage of Patrick.

Patrick was their son who was born a severe hemophiliac and received bi-weekly blood infusions to stay alive. Patrick contracted HIV from Canada's tainted blood supply in 1986 when he was just 7 years old. Patrick was a talented athlete, a gifted musician and a student of life. When in 1995 he chose to disclose his HIV status to his family and friends, he became a role model and used his experience to educate and help others to become aware of the disease. Patrick became a young man with AIDS who broke down stigmas and myths with facts, courage and action. Throughout his illness, Patrick was cared for by Dr. Susan King at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and despite persevering and living his life to the full, he died in 2001 at the age of 23.

After their son's death, the Fortins took up running to help fill the loss and void that was generated by that loss. In fact this summer, they are both going to compete in their 10th marathon which makes me tired just even thinking about it. When Dr. King was diagnosed with ALS, they turned their new interest to benefit her greatest dream, an HIV/AIDS hospice to be built in Toronto, and to keep Patrick's legacy alive. Christian and Christine Fortin set up an organization called Patrick4Life to help raise HIV/AIDS awareness and to help raise funds to establish a children's hospital or hospice in Toronto, the first in Canada to provide respite and hospice care to children and families facing life threatening illnesses and specializing in HIV/AIDS. Patrick4Life uses running and community engagement to generate awareness and resources to support the fight against HIV/AIDS and to help those who are stricken with the disease and to help their families cope with the trauma and stress. Focusing on youth Patrick4Life is a powerful source within the schools and communities of North Bay and beyond whose focus is to educate students from kindergarten through grade 12 about HIV/AIDS in a developmental manner. These programs enable students to participate in learning activities which encourage physical activity. The students also learn strategies about making healthy lifestyle choices. Partici-Patrick is an activity focused youth educational program encompassing daily physical education, character education and HIV/AIDS awareness. Youth participate in a 10 week in school program working towards completing a marathon during daily physical activity time. Since 2006, the annual RunWalk4Patrick Family Fest in North Bay has attracted just under 1,000 participants each year to raise money and awareness about HIV/AIDS and the next one is coming up on June 7th. In 2007, the Fortin family received the Paul Harris Fellow Award for

their work with Patricl4Life and Partici-Patrick. Through their personal experiences in drawing upon the example of Patrick, Christian and Christine Fortin have become true philanthropists but more than that they are an inspiration to all those who suffer through adversity and use that experience to strengthen and enrich the lives of others. Through Christine and Christian Fortin, Patrick Fortin lives on and we are all better and richer for that.

Mr. Chancellor on behalf of the senate, I am pleased to present to you Christine Fortin and Christian Fortin and ask that you confer upon each of them the degree of Doctor of Education.