
REMARKS BY CHRISTINE KARCZA & CATHERINE FRAZEE
AT THE OPENING OF
**OUT FROM UNDER:
DISABILITY, HISTORY AND THINGS TO REMEMBER**

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM,
APRIL 16, 2008

CHRISTINE KARCZA:

We remember.

We remember our struggles – against all those experts who always knew what was best for us – and told us so. We remember our allies – who fought with us to bring choice without barriers into our worlds, and the people who have welcomed us.

We remember photos taken – of the perfect medical specimen. The pictures taken to bring in donations. Words said that have hurt and told us we were less than others. Assumptions made about what we could not do and what we did not want. Expectations kept low -- without knowing who we are.

We remember being made to feel that we were not safe. We didn't belong. We were not welcome in our communities. That there were "special" places for people like us.

We remember.

CATHERINE FRAZEE:

We remember.

We remember that as we speak words of tribute and congratulation, others like us, in every corner of the world, languish in confinements of impoverishment and isolation. We remember voices never heard, lives foreclosed, fortunes run dry, trusts betrayed. We remember whose shoulders we stand on, those who are not with us in this moment. By speaking of them we make them present.

We remember that we stand on sacred ground and in fine company. We remember that what we have built here we have built together, across great difference. We remember that there is more to build tomorrow.

Tonight, we remember that we belong and that belonging looks good on us.

We remember.

CHRISTINE KARCZA:

We celebrate.

We celebrate those members of our community who have become leaders with impact and influence. Our David – who has become “Your Honour”. And you, our everyday leaders, quiet and not-so-quiet leaders, who never shirk your responsibility to educate and fight to move the disability agenda forward.

We celebrate your presence with us today.

We celebrate our victories, our citizenship, our recognition, our freedoms, our future, our flag, in the exhibit, that flew on Parliament Hill – when the laws of this country began to change to include us – people with disabilities.

We celebrate.

CATHERINE FRAZEE:

We celebrate.

We celebrate our everyday acts of coming out and speaking up, claiming our due, making our way into this nation's history and onto its radar. We celebrate all that we have learned and all that we have taught, all that we have risked and all that we have become. We celebrate our pride, our resistance, our resilience, our “kick-ass” spirit.

We celebrate our lumps and leaks and folds and scars, and in all of this messy grandeur, our gorgeous and unruly humanity. We celebrate our arrival at Canada's pre-eminent cultural institution, this wonder of the modern world. We celebrate our being made welcome here. And we celebrate that it works -- our being here.

We celebrate our coming *out from under*.

We celebrate.

CHRISTINE KARCZA:

We welcome.

We welcome the people from Ryerson's School of Disability Studies - the unique blend of passion and scholarship that is Ryerson. We welcome our families, our mothers, fathers, siblings, partners, friends – those who hold us dear and those who have stood with us, and believed in us, through time. We would not be in this place without you.

We welcome those who have come to learn and to listen, who value our contribution, create opportunities for us and open up possibilities for us to earn respect, get a paycheck and live with dignity.

Welcome.

CATHERINE FRAZEE:

We welcome.

We welcome the people of vision and purpose who have determined to make the ROM a museum for **all** people. We welcome you to our history, as you have welcomed us.

We welcome you who have written Canadian disability history, have written every word with your lives and your thirst for what is fair and decent, you whose very DNA is patterned for the survival of justice and dignity.

We welcome you who are our history and you who are our future.

We welcome you who witness tonight something fine and promising and who desire to be part of its unfolding.

We welcome you.

TOGETHER:

Welcome to Disability, History and Things to Remember.

Welcome to our exhibit – Out From Under!