



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Ottawa

**For immediate release**

The German Embassy is pleased to announce:

**The German Federal President, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier,**

has just awarded

**The Right Honourable Adrienne Louise Clarkson PC CC CMM COM CD,**

the **Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit**

of the Federal Republic of Germany

The 26th Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, has left a strong and impressive mark on her country and on Canada's relations with the world.

The German-Canadian friendship has especially flourished under her strong leadership; she connected thought-leaders, writers, artists and trade representatives of Canada and Germany in new and creative ways. For her State Visit to Germany in 2001, on the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations, she chose the theme "*Complex societies, cutting-edge culture*". Subjects like migration, federalism, protection of the environment were addressed. Some of Canada's best minds and artists met with German partners and the visit generated a host of cooperations that still stand 20 years later.

After her tenure at Rideau Hall, Madame Clarkson continued her strong engagement with Germany. The Institute for Canadian Citizenship - which she co-founded with her husband, writer and philosopher John Ralston Saul - has become a source of inspiration and of best practices for German foundations, communal leaders and cities. Its global forum for inclusion 6 Degrees is an innovative discussion gathering to counter nativism and exclusion and connect people of all origins and help them find a common language and as a result, it has been very successful in Canada. In 2017, Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul started to bring 6 Degrees to Germany. Organised in partnership with the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Bosch Foundation and the Barenboim Said Akademie, the forum has become an institution.

Madame Clarkson also serves on the Board of the Arthur F. Burns Fellowship, a program that organizes exchanges between talented young German, Canadian and US journalists.

Sabine Sparwasser, German Ambassador to Canada:

“Germany is counting itself so lucky to have as brilliant and dynamic a friend as The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson. We owe so much to her innovative drive to connect our societies at all levels and to engage in dialogue about what matters to our citizens - questions of belonging, of inclusion, of removing barriers and promoting respect and tolerance. At a time of the return of narrow nationalism, of rising societal polarization and unprecedented movement of people, we need her voice and engagement more than ever.”

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About **Adrienne Louise Clarkson**: Madame Clarkson was born in Hong Kong and arrived in Canada as a refugee in 1942 with her family and one suitcase apiece. A leading figure in Canada's cultural life, Madame Clarkson has had a rich and distinguished career in broadcasting, journalism, the arts and public service. She was the 26th Governor General of Canada (1999-2005). Upon leaving the office of Governor General in 2005, Madame Clarkson co-founded the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) with her husband, John Ralston Saul. The Institute seeks to accelerate the acculturation of new citizens into Canadian life so they can participate fully and add their important voice to our pluralistic society. An eminent writer, Madame Clarkson has also written several books since she was Governor General, including her bestselling memoir *Heart Matters* that was received with acclaim in 2006.

About **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**: born in 1956 in a working class family in Niedersachsen, he studied Law in Giessen and wrote his PhD on the rights of homeless citizens. He was - first in Niedersachsen and then in Berlin - Head of Chancellery for the Social Democratic Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. He served altogether for eight years as Foreign Minister of Germany in the Cabinet of Angela Merkel and was elected Federal President in 2017.

**For more information:**

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