

*Embargoed until 4:00 pm today*

**December 10, 2007, Winnipeg, MB:** Campaign Chair Gail Asper today announced that Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights Inc. has raised \$83 million from the Private Sector, which means the total funding in place for the Museum to date is \$243 million – Another \$8 million since the Museum was announced as a national museum by Prime Minister Harper last April. “I can’t think of a better way to celebrate today’s anniversary of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights than to acknowledge the vision and generosity of the thousands of Canadians who support this national Human Rights Museum.”

Today’s news event focused on community efforts to raise funds for the Museum. Since April, more than \$8 million has been raised by volunteer teams across Canada. “Once people knew the operating funding for the Museum was secured, the floodgates of support opened much wider,” said Gail Asper, adding that, over 1,500 new gifts have come to the museum since that date.

Wawanesa Insurance, for example, doubled their corporate donation to \$1 million. The Manitoba Nurses’ Union contributed \$100,000 and the Japanese community, through the National Association of Japanese Canadians as well as the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Citizens’ Association together has raised a total of \$77,000 for the Museum. “Now is a critical time for all Canadians to step forward and make a tangible commitment in support of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights,” stated Henry Kojima, Past President of the National Association. “Tragic lessons learned from the history of Japanese Canadians necessitates that awareness, education and dialogue are paramount in furthering a true understanding of and commitment to individual human rights. The creation of this Museum could be a catalyst to bring this about.

Emcee Leo Ledohowski, whose Canad Inns chain donated \$1 million to the Museum in February 2007, shared with the audience that he hopes the Museum will focus on influencing the future by increasing understanding not only of Canada’s human rights history, but of the international human rights events that led to the development of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. “The UN Declaration of Human Rights was the world coming together to say that collectively, we have a responsibility to prevent atrocities like the Holocaust or Ukrainian Famine from ever happening again,” said Ledohowski.

“We are very proud to be a part of the growing community of supporters of the Museum,” said Ken McCrea, President of Wawanesa Insurance. “The need for this international centre is real. Our hope is that from millions of people experiencing this Museum the effect on future generations will be seen and felt worldwide.”

“We are closer than ever to achieving our goals but there is much work to be done,” said Ms. Asper.

The **Canadian Museum for Human Rights is proposed to be the first national museum to be built outside the National Capital Region and the first national museum to be created in 40 years.** The Museum has the support of all levels of governments, as well as 50 ethno-cultural and human rights groups from across the nation. In addition, several corporations, labour groups, associations and private donors from across Canada are among its supporters. Visit the Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights website at [www.canadianmuseumforhumanrights.com](http://www.canadianmuseumforhumanrights.com)

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