

SEMINAR OPENING LECTURE TEXT

Hugo Cyr, LL. D.
Dean
Faculty of Political Sciences and Law
UQÀM

Before saying a few words about the conference itself I would like to sincerely thank the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec for all the efforts he has made in recent years to bring the institution and the people closer together. We can see that he is a real academic at heart, a historian, in addition to being a lawyer and that he wants our history to be better known, our institutional history, the history of our political life. His contribution is major. I would like to thank him for that, it is very much appreciated.

After having held a symposium on the role of lawyers before 1867 and another on the role of women in politics, he is now supporting us at this very moment, on the fiftieth anniversary of UQÀM, to mark three other fiftieth anniversaries when we witnessed greater social inclusion: the decriminalization of homosexuality, the adoption of the *Official Languages Act* and the recognition of the right to vote for Aboriginal people in Quebec.

All this in the same year that the Université du Québec à Montréal was created, an institution dedicated to democratization, inclusion and citizen participation for the greatest number of people. So, Mr. Lieutenant-Governor, I would like to thank you once again sincerely for the honour you have given us to chair and organize this event.

I would also like to thank the Barreau du Québec, which, in its promotion of the rule of law, the importance of and respect for rights and freedoms, the rule of law and respect for human dignity, is a key player who, year after year, continues to contribute to this

reflection on the importance of respect for rights at a time when, with the rise of populism, we tend to forget the fundamental importance of protecting human dignity. I would therefore like to thank the Barreau for its support of this activity.

Of course, our Faculty of Political Science and Law is honoured to participate in this activity. Our informal slogan is a world of commitment. In other words, the political scientists or lawyers we train are not trained solely to acquire knowledge or techniques, but what we are seeking to do is to help train citizens who will engage in the world, transform it, advance our rights and social values, and foster greater inclusion.

So, for our faculty, commemorating four events as important as those we can commemorate today is an excellent opportunity to be able to speak out loud and clear about our values. We are very, very proud to be part of this organization.

Fifty years is about looking back and looking forward too. We are a faculty that calls itself progressive, that aims for perpetual transformation. But there is always a risk to look only forward. There are several lessons to be learned from experience. I hope that today, with all the presentations we will have the pleasure of attending, we will be able to draw lessons that will enrich our reflection and move forward towards the achievement of our objectives, values and principles.

I wish you a very good day. Thank you!