

Professor David VanderZwaag

Dr Noel Brown

Professor Andrew Rosenberg

Ladies and gentlemen

Friends and admirers of our founder, “the mother of the oceans”, Elisabeth Mann Borgese

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you all on behalf of the IOI to this momentous occasion of launching the inauguration of the series of Elisabeth Mann Borgese Ocean Lectures in Halifax.

This evening we are celebrating and commemorating the leadership and legacy of a most remarkable woman of our century.

It is fitting that the lecture series is taking place on the 25th anniversary of the Ocean Governance course which she brought to Halifax and Dalhousie and nurtured the course, and to her credit another batch of ocean ambassadors are graduating tomorrow.

It is equally poignant that the lecture is being delivered in the place she loved and called home. Those of us who were fortunate to have known her and spent time with her at Sambro Head, can testify to the affection she had for this city and this University.

Elisabeth was the youngest daughter of the celebrated author Thomas Mann. Born in 1918, she was a social scientist, a qualified musician and a renowned scholar in international relations.

In 1948, she contributed to the founding of the committee to frame a world constitution and its journal, “Common Cause,” which inspired her to exert global efforts to frame “a constitution of the ocean.”

As we all know, Elisabeth was the architect of the Law of the Sea Convention and a driving force for more than thirty years in the search for peaceful use of the ocean. In 1967 with Amb. Arvid Pardo, then a fellow at the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Santa Barbara, she embarked on a project that became the “Ocean Regime” a blue print of the ocean constitution.

Elisabeth was fond of saying, “I’ve always looked at the sea as a laboratory in the making of the new world order,” – that order she envisaged as participational democracy.

She was of boundless energy, totally committed to the cause of the ocean. In a troubled and preoccupied world of the time, as the first woman to join the Club of Rome, she gave a voice to the ocean at the same time the ocean was her refuge. She was the idealist and the pragmatist. She was after all her own person – always that child that shared her father’s fascination with the ocean.

She after all understood the commitment to political activism and the acknowledgement of its limits. Nevertheless, she was royalty among the ocean commoners.

Just as life began in the ocean, she turned to the ocean to reassert our humanity.

Her legacy was the creation of IOI and Pacem in Maribus conferences to awaken world consciousness about the opportunities and challenges of the ocean – to live with it and from it in peace.

I can continue forever enumerating the life time achievements of that remarkable woman and the numerous accolades she received and deserved. Perhaps her greatest attribute is the genuine compassion she had for the marginalized and the deprived in the international community.

Today, we will repay a small part of the debt we owe to the woman who devoted her life to promoting awareness of the ocean and constructing a regime to protect the fragile

marine ecosystem, and for that I could not think of amore appropriate speaker than the distinguished Professor Andrew Rosenberg.

Thank you.