

## Gary Doer Still Enchants a Winnipeg Audience

On Friday, December 6, 2013, the Canadian Club of Winnipeg brought Ambassador Gary Doer back to Winnipeg for a visit over lunch. More than 300 people packed a room at the RBC Convention Centre to hear Ambassador Speak. Master of Ceremonies, John Sauder the weather reporter for CBC News, quipped that in honour of Ambassador Doer's visit we were furnished with an old fashioned Winnipeg cold snap. The opening remarks by John Sauder, Canadian Club President Jim Brennan and Dr. Lloyd Axworthy of the University of Winnipeg all focused on the same theme. No matter what his title was, Minister, Premier, Doctor or Ambassador, to those who knew him, he was simply friend.



When Ambassador Doer entered the room, he did not disappoint, graciously taking time to shake hands, chat with people and even conduct impromptu interviews with various news media in attendance. On the podium it became instantly obvious that his reputation as a politician and speaker was not exaggerated. Transitioning smoothly from talking about how much he missed Manitoba and reminiscing about events during his time as Premier to his current job as Ambassador and Canada's relationship with the U.S.A., a relationship we have had since the battle of 1812, which Doer drew applause and cheers by saying that he wished to state without a doubt that we won, Gary kept his audience riveted and entertained. At one point he produced a copy of the Washington Post and referenced an article in it about polar bears in Churchill. Doer said that even in Washington they know about Manitoba and our polar bears and often ask him about them. He said that when dealing with the United States we are not a mouse but a polar bear, drawing applause and cheers once again. Doer also talked about our political system versus the U.S. and said that although no system is perfect, ours is far superior to that of our Southern neighbours and that we should be very proud.

Doer finished with question and answers and quickly showed that he hasn't lost his political touch by fielding a question about Rob Ford and turning into his opinion for the Ford cars they drive in Washington. This brought on another cheer and a standing ovation. Ambassador Doer graciously posed for more pictures and continued to visit around the room. Without a doubt, all attendees left feeling that they had gotten their money's worth, with the possible exception of the man who asked the question about Rob Ford.

With this as the inaugural event for the return of the Canadian Club of Winnipeg the only question that remains is; who will they find to follow this event? Whoever it is, it will certainly be worth watching for.

