

It was wet that night -

December 6th, 2001 Memorial

**1. WELCOME – Cheryl
(Purpose of Dec. 6th and A Call To Action)**

Good evening, thank you for coming here tonight to participate in the Dec. 6th, National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. My name is Cheryl Dowden and I am the Admin Coordinator of the Nelson & District Women's Centre and a member of the Women's Event's Planning Committee which is responsible for the organizing of this event. Members of The Women's Event's Planning Committee include volunteers from this community, as well as representatives from the Advocacy Centre, the Violence Against Women In Relationships Committee, The Transition House and The Nelson & District Women's Centre.

Memory is resistance and the beginning of transformation! On December 6th, 1989, 14 young women at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal were murdered by a feminist-hating gunman. Most of these young women were pursuing their dream of becoming Engineers. These young women were brutally murdered. The gunman chose them because they were women and because they had chosen a non-traditional field of study.

These are the names of the women who were murdered that day:

**Genevieve Bergeron, Helene Colgan, Nathalie Croteau,
Barbara Daigneault, Anne Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick,
Barbara Naria Klueznick, Maryse Laganiere, Maryse Leclair,
Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michele Richard, Annie
St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.**

***POEM "December 6, 1989" by Lisa Carducci
(translated from French to English by Caroline Dufour)**

As long as I live, I will remember that day, 12 years ago. I will remember the shock, the horror and of feeling some fear the next time I took my seat at a desk in a classroom. It is that same feeling that many of you have experienced while walking home alone at night. The fear of violence that many women experience speaks to the reality that half of Canadian women (51% according to the Status of Women Canada) have been victims of at least one act of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.

The fact is also that women are much more likely to be victimized by someone they know than by a stranger. According to the Ministry of the Attorney General Police Services Division, the most common characteristics of a reported spousal assault are that:

- the offense occurs in the accused and victim's shared residence
- the victim is female 9 out of 10 times.

And.....

- the offender is male 9 out of 10 times

Therefore, the reason we are here tonight is not only to mourn the 14 women who were murdered in Montreal, but to remember all those lives who have been touched by violence and to consider what we can each do personally to make Canada a safer country for women and to help end all gender-based violence. The reason we are here is also to declare that women are not victims, that we are not silent and that we will speak out loudly and clearly in demanding an end to violence.

To the men in our lives, we ask that you support us by evaluating your own attitudes and how you treat women, and we call on you to openly oppose sexist behaviour among your friends, family and co-workers. In this respect, we acknowledge and thank the men of the White Ribbon Campaign for working towards this end.

As a community, let's be the change we want to see in the world.
Let's start by speaking out.

Audrey Lourde says, "when we are silent we are still afraid, so it is better to speak..." and according to Bell Hooks "talk is the mark of freeing...the act of speaking is coming to power".

2. CANDLE-LIGHTING CEREMONY **(ritual of the offerings to be placed on the rock)**

Now I would like us all to form a circle as a symbol of strength and unity and to light a candle to symbolize our hope for an end to all violence. During the candle-lighting ceremony, the Selkirk College singers will sing The Warrior Song. Once your candle is lit and you feel ready, you may come forward and place your offering on or beside the rock. The offerings represent our strength as women and our commitment to ending the violence. If you would like to remember the name of someone you know who has experienced violence, whether that person is yourself, a friend or if you wish to remember an event like the horrible murder in Langley this past weekend, the 45 women missing from Vancouver's downtown East side, or the women of Afghanistan. You may use the table and chair over there to write the name or words to be included with the offerings as a part of a memorial. After the vigil, the offerings will be gathered and will be mounted on the giant women's symbol that was created by several volunteers. Thank you Michelle and Marylou. The women's symbol will be on display at the Nelson & District Women's Centre as an artistic expression of our desire to end violence against women. After the warrior song, women wishing to speak out will be invited to do so.

3. WARRIOR SONG – Selkirk College Students

So at this time, I would like to welcome the Selkirk College singers.

4. INVITATION TO SPEAK OUT

Thank you very much to the Selkirk College singers. At this time, I would like to invite anyone who would like to speak. It may be that you just wish to speak a name as part of a memorial or you may wish to say a few words and we would like anyone who would like to do so to come forward.

5. Memorial Plaque - History

We chose to have the vigil here tonight, because this is the site in Nelson of the permanent memorial to the women who were murdered in the Montreal Massacre.

This Memorial tree and plaque, located here at Lakeside Park was the initiative of the Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR) Coordinating Committee, a multidisciplinary body of professionals dedicated to an effective response to women abuse in our community. Fundraising by the West Kootenay Women's Council and Nelson Community Services Centre made this project possible.

6. VAWIR PRESENTATION

7. BREAD AND ROSES - AD HOC SINGERS (Intro by AD HOC member)

8. CLOSING (Thank you to all in attendance and to sponsors)

I would like to thank our volunteers on the Women's Event Planning Committee for helping to organize tonight's event

and I'd like to also thank the Body Shop for their kind donation and for their public awareness campaign, and also a thank you to Maglios for supplying the wood for the giant women's symbol.

Thank you all very much for attending this evening and for your commitment to ending violence against women.

One final announcement, the Selkirk College Singers will be performing, *Singing For Our Sisters*, at 7pm tomorrow night at Studio 80, at Selkirk College. This event is a fundraiser for the Nelson & District Women's Centre. There will be 5 bands featured ranging from funk, to rock, to reggae. The students have worked very hard at organizing this event and have even written a song for the women's centre. We hope that you come out and enjoy this event. Tickets are \$5 to \$15.