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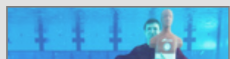
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UCalgary students attend inspirational address from former first lady Michelle Obama

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Growing seeds of change and inspiring our youth

By University Relations Staff

March 29, 2018

"To our young people: We're counting on you and we believe in you ... We have more to learn from you about resilience, persistence and honesty and inclusion. I can't wait to see what you all will do. And I know the adults in this room will be there hopefully to support you every step of the way. I know I will." — former first lady Michelle Obama

Messages of resilience, women and youth empowerment, and the power of hope were key themes at An Evening with Michelle Obama — a keynote address from the former first lady last week in Calgary.

Fifty tickets were donated to UCalgary students, thanks to a generous group of donors led by University of Calgary Chancellor Emerita Joanne Cuthbertson. Students committed to volunteerism and community service were entered in a draw for a ticket to attend the special event. All participants in the draw were current full-time students at the university and were selected randomly beginning March 15, until all 50 tickets were allocated.

"I thought the event was absolutely amazing. As a young woman who has many dreams, hearing Michelle Obama speak about her journey was very inspirational," says Manpreet Deol, Schulich Leader National Scholarship recipient, and third-year mechanical and biomedical engineering student. "I am so thankful to the donors — it was a privilege to attend this event."

A donation of 10 tickets to the Faculty of Law paved the way for members of the Calgary Women Studying Law Association (CWSLA) to attend the Michelle Obama event. The CWSLA works to promote and support women entering the legal profession, so attending the event and hearing about Michelle Obama's work in law prior to her work with the White House was particularly poignant.

"Michelle Obama has had an extraordinary impact through her career as a legal professional and public servant," notes third-year law student Katie Moore. "Hearing her words of inspiration and encouragement help to support the next generation of leaders."

Drawing on her experiences as first lady and her personal journey growing up in Chicago, Obama discussed supporting women to be leaders, the importance of the youth movement, and growing seeds of change in our communities.

"Michelle Obama is truly an inspiring person who overcame difficult odds to become a champion in youth engagement and women's empowerment," says Patrick Jones, fifth-year political science student in the Faculty of Arts. "She concluded her speech with a message specifically for young people, stating that adults have more to learn from youth about resilience, inclusion, persistence, and honesty.

"It was energizing to hear that she is supporting us in our journey as we enter a new chapter in our lives and I believe that every University of Calgary student in the audience left feeling uplifted and inspired to continue making positive changes on our campus and in our community. I cannot thank the donors enough for giving students who otherwise could not afford to purchase a ticket the opportunity to attend this event," says Jones.



Manpreet Deol, Schulich Leader National Scholarship recipient and third-year mechanical and biomedical engineering student, attends An Evening with Michelle Obama. University of Calgary photo

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