

The Empire Club Presents



**WOMEN WHO LEAD PANEL
FEATURING: TERESA RESCH,
CAROLINE RISEBORO, PHILIP GROSCH
IN CONVERSATION WITH NICOLE FOSTER**

Welcome Address, by Barbara Jesson, President of Jesson + Company Communications Inc. and President of the Empire Club of Canada

March 7, 2018

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From One King Street West in downtown Toronto, welcome, to the Empire Club of Canada. For those of you just joining us through either our webcast or our podcast, welcome, to the meeting.

Before our distinguished speakers are introduced today, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our Head Table Guests. I would ask each Guest to rise for a brief moment and be seated as your name is called. I would ask the audience to refrain from applauding until all of the Head Table Guests have been introduced.

HEAD TABLE

Distinguished Guest Speakers:

Mr. Philip Grosch, Partner and National Leader, PwC Canada

Ms. Teresa Resch, Vice President, Basketball Operations & Player Development, Toronto Raptors

Ms. Caroline Riseboro, President and Chief Executive Officer, Plan International Canada

Guests:

Ms. Megan Boyle, Director, Public Affairs, Red Bull Canada; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Celina Caesar-Chavannes, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development

Ms. Catherine Charlton, Member of the Ontario Status of Women Council, 1975; First Female Manager at Ford, Canada; First Female President of the Empire Club of Canada (1984–85); Former Executive Director of ProAction Cops & Kids

Mr. Chandran Fernando, Principal, Matrix360

Ms. Nicole Foster, National Chair, Equal Voice

Mr. Don Manlapaz, Vice President, Development, Forgestone Capital

Ms. MJ Perry, Vice President and Owner, Mr. Discount Ltd.; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Chadwick Westlake, Senior Vice President, Structural Cost Transformation & Lean, Scotiabank; Member, Scotiabank Inclusion Council

My name is Barbara Jesson. I am the President of Jesson + Company Communications and the President of the Empire Club of Canada. Ladies and gentlemen, your Head Table Guests. We are also very delighted to welcome a group of students from Ryerson who are attending with the generous support of Coca-Cola Canada. Students, welcome. We are always delighted when we can have you with us. Where is our group of students? Please, stand and be recognized.

As I began to think about our panel, today, I reflected back on my own first introduction to the Empire Club of Canada. It was not quite back in the dark ages, before women were admitted to these lunches, but it might have been before the first woman served as President. Along with another colleague, I had been invited to an event at the Royal York Hotel. We arrived in our best business suits to join what was then a predominantly male audience. It certainly never occurred to me, then, that one day I might be back here at the podium as President marking International Women's Day.

Jump to today and we, at the Empire Club of Canada, are very proud to have 12 women on our board of directors, all of them accomplished senior leaders at some of Canada's top organizations.

I arrived in Toronto as a young woman, ardently committed to women's issues. My generation was part of that wave of feminism that followed the sexual revolution of the '60s. They were heady times. Like many others, I joined the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women, meeting in kitchens and living rooms after work to discuss issues and plot

strategies. In preparing for my remarks, today, I did try to do some research to remind myself of some of our activities and achievements. I confess, it gave me a bit of a start to find the committee listed on the Canadian Heritage database. It appears that we have been archived. That was a bit traumatic. For those of us who fought so earnestly for the right to enter Canada's boardrooms, the right to control our bodies, for the rights in family law, it seems now to be such an innocent time. The issues, today, seem so complex, compounded by the needs of immigrant women, Indigenous communities and a growing revolution in health sciences and technology. For all of these reasons, I am just delighted to host this panel of leading women and men in Canada in acknowledgment of International Women's Day.

With us is Ms. Celina Caesar-Chavannes, as I have mentioned. She is Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development. Ms. Caesar Chavannes is a successful entrepreneur and the recipient of both the Toronto Board of Trade's Business Entrepreneur of the Year for 2012 and the 2007 Black Business and Professional Association's Harry Jerome Young Entrepreneur Award.

With her is Philip Grosch, a Partner and National Leader in the Digital Services Consulting practice at PwC Canada. He is the founding sponsor and champion of PwC's innovative leadership program called Women in Leadership, which is targeted at top talent and, particularly, women. He is a board member of WNORTH, a boutique conference for top and aspiring women business leaders.

Also on our panel is Teresa Resch. In her fifth season with the Raptors Basketball Franchise, Teresa was promoted to Vice President, Basketball Operations & Player Development in August 2015. Prior to that, she worked with the NBA assisting the International Basketball Operations department in operating Basketball Without Borders Camps on four different continents, and, in the process, established the first camp to feature women campers.

Our fourth panelist is Caroline Riseboro. Caroline is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Plan International Canada, the leading NGO in the country, which advances the rights of children and equality for girls. In 2017, she was recognized as a Canada's Most Powerful Women Top 100 Award Winner. She received the Bronze medal in the Woman of the Year – Government or Non-Profit category at the Stevie Awards for Women in Business.

Our panel moderator is Nicole Foster, Head of Amazon Web Services Public Policy in Canada. As Equal Voice National Chair, she has served on the board of directors since 2015. She is an active volunteer with the Historic Daughters of the Vote Program. She served two terms as President of the National Women's Liberal Commission, and on the Liberal Party of Canada's National Board of Directors.

A very prestigious panel joining us today. Ladies and gentlemen, I now welcome Celina Caesar-Chavannes to the podium to offer words of welcome.

Ms. Celina Caesar-Chavannes

Good afternoon, everyone. It is an absolute pleasure to be here this afternoon. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations with a special recognition to the Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation.

On this, the celebration of International Women's Day, it gives me great honour to be here on behalf of the Minister of Status of Women, Maryam Monsef. Today, we join Canadians across the country and around the world, celebrating women's contributions to our country and the common purpose we share in advancing equality, together. It is an honour to be here with you on a very important day.

This year's International Women's Day theme is 'My Feminism'. It recognizes the role that feminism plays in bringing about positive change here in Canada and internationally while building a more equal, secure and prosperous world. My Feminism is inclusive. It is about equality for all women and people of all genders. It is also intersectional. It is about empowering women and girls and people of all genders, no matter the complexity of their experience to speak up and to make their voices heard. I know that many of you in this room know that I am no stranger to speaking up on a lot of issues that are critically important to ensuring that this country remains as prosperous for everyone as possible.

Most importantly, My Feminism is about possibility, because when we work together and truly value what we bring to our country and to the world, there is no limit to what we

can achieve. The good news is that on this path to equality, we have made significant progress as a country over the last 150 years. Much has been achieved by working together, but there is still a lot that we need to do. Today, we stand on the shoulders of many generations of women, activists and advocates, many of whom are in the room today, who have turned so-called women's issues into issues for all Canadians.

Now, it is our turn to build on their success, to leverage the momentum created over the past year by #MeToo movements and global women's marches. The question we face now is to seize the possibilities of the movement to create promising futures for women, young women, and girls.

The Government of Canada prides itself on its leadership, its policy and the resources we have put behind this movement. We recognize that leadership is critical, and I am proud that Canada is being recognized around the world on its gender equality. Through a growing list of actions, the federal government is playing its part and leading by example.

Our feminist agenda includes appointing a first gender-balanced federal cabinet; announcing a first federal strategy to address gender-based violence; enhancing the use of gender-based analysis by federal organizations; increasing the diversity of over 4,000 senior federal appointments; using the comply or explain approach to increase diversity on corporate boards; and incorporating the first full gender statement in last year's federal budget. And in Budget 2018, we built on that. Canada's theme for International Women's Day reflects the government's feminist agenda. This agenda is also re-

flected in our budget, which focuses on gender equality as a driver of economic growth and strengthening the middle class. Budget 2018 supports the federal government's people-centred approach and is guided by new gender results framework. This GBA+ legislation will be enshrined into all budgets going forward.

Budget 2018 also commits \$100 million over five years to the Women's Program at the Status of Women Canada. This new investment will support projects to end violence against women and girls and prove their economic security and prosperity and advance women and girls into leadership and decision-making positions. As well, Status of Women Canada will finally be made an official department within the government, strengthening its capacity to apply the gender and diversity lens to all programs.

The Budget also included measures to help improve women, economically, through a women entrepreneurship strategy that ensures an EI parental sharing plan that allows both men and women to participate in growing our children. We are strengthening the Canada Child Benefit, which helps more families who need it the most, such as those who are single mothers. In 2017's fall economic statement, we indexed these benefits to keep up with the cost of living. This is very good news for families.

We also know that Indigenous peoples, in particular, those who live in remote Northern communities face barriers when it comes to accessing federal benefits, such as the Canada Child Benefit. To help Indigenous peoples access the full

range of social benefits, the Government of Canada is providing investments of \$17.3 million over three years to expand outreach to Indigenous communities and conduct pilot outreach activities for urban, Indigenous communities.

This is what we are doing domestically, but, on the international stage, our leadership is well known and recognized. Our commitment to ensuring that equality and the empowerment of women and girls are placed at the centre of Canada's G7 presidency in 2018 is critical. We are working to mainstream gender equality across the work of the G7, including as part of all government-to-government engagement by ministers.

Canada, last year, was elected to be a member of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to help shape the Commission's work going forward. Of course, in my role as Parliamentary Secretary, we have put in place Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which focuses on the empowerment of women and girls as we look to build a more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous world because we know that we cannot do so while leaving 50% of the population behind.

Ladies and gentlemen, feminism is a call to action for everyone who believes in gender equality, and it cannot happen without you. You could inspire others by using the hashtag #myfeminism to join the conversation. Use it to tell us what feminism means to you, to share stories about how you are helping to advance equality in your communities and beyond. You can be an inspirational role model or a mentor by shar-

ing your experiences in business, government and nonprofit organizations. At the end of the day, every action matters, whether large or small. It will move our communities and country closer to a healthy, respectful society that we want.

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot leave this stage without acknowledging that over the past few days, it has been particularly challenging for myself in the role that I have. I have heard individuals say that I might be a one-term MP because I continue to speak up about issues. I accept that. I accept that, because my feminism requires me to be bold. It requires me to have uncomfortable conversations and to speak my truth. It requires me to smash and challenge the status quo, but my feminism is not for everybody. Not everyone likes black coffee, no sugar, no cream. I implore you to be bold in your definition of your feminism. We have an army of young girls and boys here in Canada who are expecting no less from you. Thank you.

BJ: Thank you so much, Celina. That was very inspirational. I would like to now ask the rest of the panel to join us, to enter into our discussion. Nicole, I think you will be supervising, directing, managing and making sure that they stay on track.

Teresa Resch, Caroline Riseboro, Philip Grosch in conversation with Nicole Foster

NF: Wonderful. I will just say thank you to everyone who is here, on behalf of the panel here. My name is Nicole Foster. We are really excited to see such a full room here to celebrate International Women's Day for 2018.

The organization that I am a very, very active volunteer, passionate volunteer with is Equal Voice. What Equal Voice does is really advocate for the election of more women. It is multi-partisan, which carries its challenges with it, as you can imagine, but one of the things that we really feel strongly about is that having women in positions of power and influence in our government is supremely important in terms of advancing the cause of women. Women, like Celina, are part of what inspires me.

I have always been looking for examples of leadership. Twenty years ago, there were very few examples of female political leadership, particularly at that national level or that international level. I particularly wanted to ask Teresa, because you were in such a unique field for a woman, and you are really leading in that organization: Did you have role models that inspired you in the world of sport?

TR: Before I answer that question, I want to say thank you so much for inviting me to be here. I am not from Toronto, originally, so the Empire Club is something brand new to me. It is great to learn a little bit about what this orga-

nization is about, and be in a room full of people that—you know a lot of these faces I have not really seen in a front office of an MBA team before? It is great to have a broader audience, and, hopefully, we have a lot of Raptor fans in here, though, so maybe at the ACC. Oh good, friendly audience.

I think you always have role models, definitely, that you look up to. Growing up, I played sports. I grew up in a very small town. There was only about 1,200 people. As a 6-foot-tall woman, you are obviously playing all the sports, even if you are good or not. My first kind of role models were at that level, so I mean my coaches and the people that I played for. I did not really think of a national, much less international scale. As I have gained a greater world view, those people, those mentors, those inspirations, have also become bigger.

I think, honestly, the biggest inspiration has never really been women. It has been, really, men, because those are the people filling those roles. Now, I hope that having that opportunity to be a female in the executive position on an MBA team, and, really, very, very few, people actually see women in those positions, and maybe there is a little boy who aspires to be me. That is what I hope.

NF: Absolutely. Caroline, in the work that you are doing at Plan International, maybe you could just give us a little bit of insight into sort of the things that you are working on at the organization and what is sort of front of mind for you right now at Plan International.

CR: For a bit of background, Plan International is one of the largest NGOs in the world. We work specifically on children's rights, and especially equality for girls. We are pleased to be working around the world in about 73 countries, but also here in Canada with Canadian youth.

What is top of mind right now? I think we have all heard of the #MeToo movement and have actively engaged in it. I think what we are seeing is a real tide of momentum behind gender equality, not just because it is good for women and girls, but because we realize that gender equality actually helps entire societies move forward. We are really working around the world on something called gender transformation. What is that? It is not only changing the condition of women and girls, but it is changing their social position. For instance, for many years, international development organizations have gone into different parts of the world; we have built schools, we have helped facilitate and strengthen health systems, but we were not seeing the needle move. Why? Well, because if a girl is not valued enough for her to be sent to school, you can build as many schools as you want, but you are not really making change. What we are doing is actually working at all levels of society: government, community, and even the beliefs that individuals hold to increase the value of women and girls around the world.

Just to finish the question, not only are we doing that around the world, but we realize there is work to be

done here in Canada as well. We work with Canadian youth to overcome challenges that they face, and they are significant. This statistic bothers me. We polled girls, teenaged girls; 66% of them say that they feel their gender still negatively influences their academic and career choices. We are also doing that work here in Canada, and there is lots of work still to be done.

NF: You mentioned #MeToo. There was no way we were not going to talk about that today. What I have seen in some of the articles has really been people starting to talk about not just how this is impacting women, but the role that men can play in really having a constructive role in a positive way. I just, first of all, want to say it is really great to have some men here celebrating International Women's Day with us and having this conversation today as well.

Philip, you have a fantastic story to tell, I think, about not just what your organization is doing, but also, I think you came to this very uniquely. Maybe you could talk a little bit about how you have come here and maybe a little bit about what you have learned and what you are doing at PwC.

PG: Great. Thanks a lot. I will echo that I appreciate the opportunity to be here. I do think it is important to have men in part of this conversation because I think to have a conversation around gender equality where you only have one gender, obviously, does not get us there.

It also gives me an appreciation of what a lot of

times my female colleagues go through when they are sitting as the only woman at a table with a lot of guys.

I can tell you the first couple of times I did it, it was a little bit uncomfortable, but I am getting more comfortable at it.

I think that our story has got a great sort of momentum, but, as we began, we had done a lot of work around trying to solve the problem. We had started with what I would say is high-level conversations. Gender equality is important. Over a period of time, in reality, we were not really making a big impact. I think the reason behind that is there will be a small portion of an organization who buys into that at a conceptual level, but the reality is you have unconscious and conscious bias inside organizations. What we then started to do was to turn the language into “This is a business imperative,” and it is for us, and, I would say, for all organizations, it is all around talent.

We started to break it into here are some simple facts. As PwC, we hire at our intake level, 50/50. In fact, in some years, we saw 52 men and women. The reality is, when we start getting to the mid-career point, which is about five to seven years in, we start losing top talent women at a significantly greater rate than in male counterparts. That varies in our different lines of service, but then the end result is when you get to our executive ranks, which is partners. Today, we are about 72% male partners. We use that as the foundation that says we hire

the best and brightest and incredible talent, and we put this effort and energy in, and then we lose that. There were deep perspectives on all the reasons why they leave. I would say that we have proven that all of those points of view that people have are actually wrong because we now have role models across every perspective of—and the common one is this is the time you are going to start a family.

We have lots of senior leaders who have shown that with the right support, that actually can be overcome. We took that, and we have built this amazing program. We have just finished our fifth year. We do not have the problem of explaining to people why this is important for two reasons. One is we have got the numbers. We can show that the retention of these amazingly talented women who have gone through the program has increased significantly. The number of our partners who are graduates of the program is increasing, and about 60% of our partner pipeline, the women segment of that partner pipeline, are graduates of the program, which puts us on course to the goal that our CEO set, which is we want to have our new partner class of 2020 to be 50/50.

That is what we have done. It has been an awesome experience. I have some of my teammates who have really helped make this program come together. I think, yes, we are proud of it, and we are making an impact.

CF: That is amazing. You mentioned mentorship and sponsorship, which we hear a lot about. We hear how im-

portant that is for women in terms of really advancing their careers. Because of #MeToo, I have started to hear some of my male colleagues talk about backing away from developing any kind of a more professional, close relationship to their female colleagues. I am just wondering if others are hearing that as well in terms of your world.

Caroline?

CR: I think whenever there is a social movement that is pushing to progress, pushing to challenge the status quo, pushing to make real change happen, there is always some inertia that comes along with it. I would say I am not surprised. I was speaking last week on this same topic, and we opened the questions up to the audience. There were many men in the audience, and this young gentlemen came up to the mic and said, “I hear what you are saying, but what if I just want to tell a woman that she is looking nice today or that she is beautiful? Now, I am feeling like I cannot even do that anymore.” I think that is a valid point. I understand where he is maybe coming from, but the reality is that women and men, in some cases, have these years of systemic discrimination simply because they were women or simply because they were girls. I think, yes, we are going to hear comments like that, but we have to get back to the ultimate goal, which is trying to create a society that is more equal so everyone can realize their full human potential.

We know that we still have lots of work to do around the world and here, in Canada. Globally, if we just had 25% more women participate in the workforce, we would increase global GDP by over \$5 trillion. We want to solve our economic woes, help develop policies that allow women to participate. In Canada, if we can get women participating equally as much as men, we know that we would increase the economy by \$500 billion. Again, these are the end goals that we need to keep in mind because, ultimately, this benefits men and women.

I hear the comment, but I do think we have just got to keep pushing forward.

CF: Teresa, do you have anything you wanted to add?

TR: I think with the #MeToo movement, in sports, especially, I know there are just so few women working in sports, I think what it has done is it has given a voice to those people who maybe could not or felt like they could not say something. You talk about being in a room and being the only man. I do not think I have ever been in a room that has had—a lot of times I am the only woman, so I think you kind of just start to get comfortable in those positions. I think maybe, more than anything, it has made everybody—I can say this, especially, as a female in a very male-dominated industry—not let some of those things slide that maybe they did before.

I think a lot of it is just unintentional. I know that we had a big town hall before the season started to make sure that our staff was all aligned. I am very proud to

say the Raptors have eight women working directly with the team on the Raptors' side and a few more on the 905 side—our minor league team that plays in Mississauga. We are well represented. As crazy as that sounds, we have eight out of 45 people, but we definitely have the most women working directly with the team throughout all of NBA. I do not know the stats, but I would go to say probably in professional sports.

I had a chance to say, what happens a lot is sometimes people get very passionate, and they have choice words that they want to share. What would happen, sometimes, is they would say, “Oh, well, I am sorry, Teresa, I did not mean to offend you,” or they would say that to another woman in the room. I had to say, “You may think that you are being sensitive to me, but, ultimately, you are pointing me out because I am different.” I do not think anybody in that room had ever seen it that way. I think it is never intentional, but it has given people a voice to say something that maybe they felt, and maybe point out some of those unconscious biases that happen. I think, personally, when you talk about the #MeToo movement, I see that is the effect that it has really had in a very specific way with the Toronto Raptors.

NF: Philip, I know that you are a really passionate coach for the group that you mentor or work with at PwC.

How do you recruit others to this cause?

PG: I think maybe I will sort of build upon the question

around sponsorship because there is no question that the key to success is sponsorship. There are very few people that you will ever meet who would say I have got to where I am without sponsorship. Then, you have got the second fact, which is that women tend to be over-mentored and under-sponsored. That probably can be easily explained by that we still have a male-dominated corporate America. McKinsey, in their annual report, actually called that out last year.

I think the #MeToo movement does have potential, but I think you have to just get over that, because—and what we have done is two things. One is we actually inform and educate the folks on our program around how you earn sponsorship. Then, the second thing we have done is we have done a lot of work around raising the awareness around why sponsorship is important. Then, we ask people to sponsor someone. We do not tell them who it is because we do not believe you can actually assign somebody because our experience has been that does not work. If you say go out and find someone that you believe in, you see what they have and sponsor them, and then tell us how it is going, and that grassroots movement is really how we are doing from the bottom-up approach.

We have also used the HeForShe movement to rally a lot of our male partners and senior leaders to actually get with the cause and to say we are going to sponsor someone. The other one, in the spirit of unconscious

bias, is actually when you see unconscious bias, do not confront it, because it is unconscious, but engage in the education. Where people start to do that, we have actually seen the change in the conversation.

Once you get some momentum, it is almost like a snowball effect: More and more people get on board, and you can see this is how you solve the problem. I am really confident that—and especially in Canada—with this quest for gender equality, we can absolutely get there and, in some ways, if we, as Canadians, cannot get there, then the rest of the world has a real big problem.

CF: I cannot believe we are nearly out of time, because this has gone so fast. I think maybe as a final question I will ask all three of you to give a little bit of wisdom or a little bit of advice that you can share with the audience, either a strategy that you have used to advance your own career or something that you have seen another woman in your organization or outside of your organization use to increase her profile in the organization and increase her career. Maybe we can just share a little bit of wisdom with the other women in the room before we wrap up. Do you want to go first, Caroline?

CR: Sure. I get the hard question first. We can talk about mentoring a lot. I do agree. I do think women are over-mentored. I constantly hear from women, “Please, suggest a mentor; be a mentor.” I think there is some benefit in that, but it is almost like we are trying to use it as a bit of a silver bullet. Then there is sponsorship,

but the challenge with sponsorship is that it is not really within our own control. Again, we are still sort of hoping that a man in power might sponsor us.

My recommendation and my advice is, I think we underestimate courage. I will tell you this: If you want to be in a senior-level role, you have to practice courage along the way because you are going to be required, if you are going to change the status quo, to make some very courageous decisions that go against the grain. You cannot start to learn how to be courageous once you are in the senior role. You need to learn how to be courageous along the way. In fact, that is what is going to get you there. I say courage is not the absence of fear; it is doing it despite fear.

Question to the women in the group: How many of you have tried to do something this year that is courageous that you thought ‘This might just get me fired’? People laugh at this question all the time, but it is so important because it is really when you are at that pivotal moment where you are thinking this may not work or this may work. You are actually starting to produce real change. So, I say step out in courage. Try things along the way. Take risks. These are the things that will advance your career, that will get you noticed, that will give you profile, because there are not a lot of us that are willing to really go against the grain. Leadership is oftentimes about sacrifice. It is about going out there first and oftentimes being the one who is starting the change,

despite the fact that there may be others that want it, but you are the one that is willing to go out there and potentially even sacrifice yourself in the quest to challenge the status quo.

Again, courage is so critical. Practicing that courage builds resilience. You need resilience if you are going to change the status quo.

NF: What is your advice, Philip?

PG: I will build upon that and maybe sort of the topic to the guys in the room because I agree with you. I think that is absolutely required. In order to make that courage turn into something productive, you actually need to have a sponsor who, when that individual who may have pushed a little bit too hard and broken some glass, and then the conversation happens behind closed doors, that is where the role of the sponsor comes to play. The sponsor stands up for that individual and says, “Just because you do not like the fact that that young woman is being aggressive—which, by the way, if she were a man, you would say ‘awesome’.” Sponsors stand there and say, “Enough of that.” I think all the guys in this room should basically leave and say that if you are not sponsoring somebody, you should figure it out. Find someone. My experience has been you actually get more out of the relationship than the person that you are supporting because, in this quest towards understanding how we actually work together and collaborate, it has been an amazing learning experience for me. That is why I always look at it and

say I am not sure that they actually got as much benefit as I did. I would leave it at that. Sponsor someone.

TR: I am going to sound like a broken record, but the two things—I wish I would have gotten to go first, now—I was thinking of is really, number one, do not eliminate yourself. I think it kind of goes with courage. I know I am guilty of it. I have done it throughout my career. I have eliminated myself from a position, from a promotion, from going after something before anybody stood in my way, unfortunately. I read *Lean In*. We do that to ourselves. It is a trait of women. We have to stop doing that. Do not eliminate yourself, whether it is an opportunity in the career or your personal side. Let somebody else stop you before you stop yourself. We have enough barriers to get over; we do not have to be our biggest one.

The second thing—and it kind of goes to what you were talking about with sponsors—is we have to have advocates for the advancement of women. You have to be an advocate for those people that you know that need a little extra push, who maybe you have seen them eliminate themselves, and you tell them to go forward. Unfortunately, to get to the very senior levels, a lot of times those decisions are made behind closed doors, and it is still all men there. Ask how you are making sure that women are being talked about in that conversation.

You never know unless you are in that position. I know, in our conversation at the Raptors, when we are hiring new people, I will not say women are always in the

conversation, but if there is a qualified woman who can do the job, absolutely, she is in the conversation.

I think that is really, really important that there is a voice there and that there are advocates for the advancement of women. I think being a sponsor is pretty much the same thing. I just reiterated what you both said. Thank you.

NF: I am officially two minutes over time. Please, join me in thanking this fantastic panel. Happy International Women's Day!

BJ: I had hoped we would have a few minutes for questions, but we are out of time. I would like to ask Mr. Chandran Fernando, of Matrix 360, to thank our speakers.

**Note of Appreciation, by
Chandran Fernando, Principal, Matrix 360**

Good afternoon. I am Chandran Fernando from Matrix 360. I am the founding and managing partner of our organization.

Firstly, I would really, sincerely, like to thank you for attending this important conversation this afternoon. At Matrix 360, we speak, breathe and live diversity and inclusion every day. Our platform is built on purposeful leadership. For 17 years, yes—I look like I am 25—Matrix has laid the foundation for diversity and inclusion in the commercial real estate industry and development sector as well across Canada.

We are partners and champions of progressive growth for people and business.

It is with great privilege and honour that I stand here with you here today. You see, today is a conversation that strikes a major chord in my DNA—gender parity and female leadership. Women have continued to shape, guide and inspire me to the man that I am today.

As a male, I strongly believe that it is integral and key that I use my male voice to elevate the importance of female leadership in all capacities. I say 'female', because what Caroline mentioned, it is about girls and women. We cannot forget about our young girls who are in the system of our society, of our ecosystem.

I salute all the women and men who have come before me today. More importantly, I would really like to acknowledge the executive board committee and staff at the Empire Club for your unconditional dedication and commitment. Your thought leadership is much appreciated and welcomed. Thank you to all.

Finally, to our distinguished panelists, your Intel, your perspectives and further commitment to spotlight the importance of female leadership in our everyday society is very important, and I thank you.

Lastly, if I may leave with you one thought and one call to action this afternoon it would be that it is time to acknowledge and be mindful that diversity is a fact, and it is not an emerging trend. Inclusion is an intentional action, and belonging is the outcome that we all must strive

towards. The call to action, as you all are here and you are now more in the know after today's conversation, I ask that you consciously ask your leaders, your peers, your community, your male colleagues and female colleagues and yourself, how you are able to build an inclusive society and live the reality of being Canadian and global citizens, as we are a nation of diversity and inclusion, and we must embrace and cherish this every day of our life.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart to your hearts, and, please, continue to be inspired and push and challenge and be courageous and take the risk and ask your leaders and your peers What are we doing to make Canada a more inclusive and progressive society? Thank you, again.

Concluding Remarks, by Barbara Jesson

I hope you all found this luncheon as inspiring as I did. I do want to say a special thank you to Megan Boyle, the Empire Club Director who made all of this come together for us. She had some formidable competition. You may have heard that the prime minister is in the city today, so I am very impressed with the way that she has pulled our program together. We all owe her a great debt of gratitude. Thank you so much, Megan.

I also want to express a sincere thank you to our generous sponsors for making this event possible: Matrix 360, Scotiabank and Coca-Cola. Without sponsors, we could not

hold these kinds of forums that I think are so important to the public dialogue. We are sincerely grateful to all of you for helping to make that possible. Thank you.

I also want to thank mediaevents.ca, Canada's online event space for webcasting today's event for thousands of viewers around the world. Also, thank you to the National Post, our print media sponsor and to Toronto Life, our media sponsor. We are just delighted with that partnership. Jessica is with us, today, so we are very grateful.

Although our club has been around since 1903, we have moved into the 21st century and we are active on social media. Please, follow us on Twitter at @Empire_Club and visit us online at www.empireclub.org. You can also follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Finally, please, join us again soon at our next lunch, this one on March 9th— this is a banner week for us—featuring Josh Blair from TELUS right at this location, One King West. Thank you so much for your attendance, today.

This meeting is now adjourned.