

The Right Honourable **Adrienne Clarkson** Governor General of Canada: **On Libraries and Reading**

by **Kendra Godin-Svoboda**

I'm the kind of person who cries, not only at sad movies, but also during those heart-wrenching commercials and sometimes when I see a baby. So when I say that our Governor General's keynote address moved me to tears, it is not that uncommon for me. But I was not the only one with Kleenex and sniffles, as Her Excellency the Honourable Adrienne Clarkson opened our 100th Anniversary Event with ceremony, laughter and not a small sense of history.

Mme. Clarkson has always had an air of grace and importance about her. I always thought she was far too sophisticated to be hosting a television show, but the depth of her concern and the excellence of her delivery made everything she did worth watching. Her voice is smooth, yet strong and it resonates with truth and passion.

Her address to over 1,500 librarians and teacher-librarians in that room confirmed our important role in a free and democratic society; celebrated our vital history, linked to the history of Canada; and ignited our passion to move forward in paving the future with literacy and information access for all citizens of this great land. Mme. Clarkson's warmth and engaging manner drew us into her world as she recounted her youth and the essential role that libraries and books played in her life.

With emotion, we traveled with her, up the big staircase of the Carnegie Library in Ottawa, next to the Boys and Girls House on Metcalfe and into "... a beautiful library with columns – a temple to the book." Here she was introduced to the exciting world of Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights and Pericles

