



THE  
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL  
SOCIETY OF CALGARY



Founded 1966 Patron: Randolph Churchill III

June 2021

President: Dr. Mark Milke

## From the President

There are many exciting updates from the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary endeavors, ranging from the Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project to a new arts scholarship for Alberta students. However, first, the news on our memorial dinner.

### Our annual dinner: Now scheduled for May 2022

Due to continuing concerns this spring about the Coronavirus, and limits on gatherings, the annual memorial dinner was delayed yet again, until next spring. Our dinner speaker will be Allen Packwood, [Director of the Churchill Archives Centre](#) at Cambridge University.

### Online Zoom socials this spring

Given the Covid restrictions on in-person, another board member (David Holmes) and I began a series of online Zoom socials this spring where I interviewed various authors, which was then followed with a Question & Answer session. The three authors included Neville Thompson in March on his book, [The Third Man: Churchill, Roosevelt, MacKenzie King, and the Untold Friendships That Won WWII](#); Catherine Grace Katz in April on [The Daughters of Yalta, The Churchills, Roosevelts and Harrimans: A Story of Love and War](#); and Lindsay Shepherd: [Diversity and Exclusion: Confronting the Campus Free Speech Crisis](#). The first two Zoom "socials" each attracted 35 participants with the third 120 virtual attendees. We may continue these interviews in the fall even if we re-activate in-person socials. If you are not yet signed up for emails, please do sign up at [www.churchillcalgary.ca/newsletters](http://www.churchillcalgary.ca/newsletters).

I would like to thank all members, supporters, board members, the *Calgary Herald* and all Calgarians who have donated time and funds to honour the legacy and leadership of Sir Winston Churchill, a legacy that contributed to freedom and flourishing in his century and in ours. Our collective congratulations to all

students who have participated in debates at Sir Winston Churchill High School and at Mt. Royal University's Moot Court.

The following updates are from various board members. My November 2020 column in the *Calgary Herald* (a long-time partner with the Society) on the Churchill statue project appears at the end of this newsletter.

Kind regards,

Mark Milke, President.

## A new Churchill Society Student Arts Scholarship – Bill Bewick Sr.

The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary is proud to partner with the Alberta University of the Arts to award \$2,000 in scholarships annually (two scholarships of \$1,000 each) to exceptional students entering the second- and third-year painting program at Alberta University of the Arts.



This scholarship reflects Churchill's own interest in the arts and specifically in painting. Churchill developed this hobby following

his removal as First Lord of the Admiralty after the allied defeat in the Dardanelles campaign in 1915.

British artist Walter Sickert made Churchill's acquaintance in 1927. Churchill and Sickert took to each other immediately. Sickert provided mentorship and advice with painting techniques and handling of materials and surfaces. He also introduced Churchill to the use of photography and the magic lantern in relation to his painting images. In the thirties, French artist Paul Maze was a painting companion. Churchill was also acquainted with Sir William Nicholson, a popular British painter. Churchill always found time to paint at home and during his frequent travels. He was never a professional artist but was hailed as a very competent amateur. His painting style shows influences of the impressionist period. He was most fond of painting nature and landscapes.

As he wrote in his 1950 book, *Painting as a Pastime*, Churchill believed that one should choose a hobby unlike that which one does on a daily basis to exercise another part of one's being. For Churchill, he thought it necessary to exercise a different part of his mind—his esthetic, creative side, which is why he chose to paint. As Churchill wrote, "It is only when new cells are called into activity...that relief, repose, refreshment are afforded."

Many of Churchill's paintings are available for viewing [online by googling "Churchill" and "Wikiart"](#). Your donations to the Churchill Society of Calgary have made this new student scholarship possible. Thank you.

## Sir Winston Churchill High School Debate tournament - Elisa Frank

The annual Sir Winston Churchill High School Debate tournament sponsored by the society (for \$2,000) was held on Saturday, November 14, 2020. Like many things, the tournament was held entirely online this year. While online debates have been of interest for some time, this year is the first time that it has become the primary way of delivering these programs for students.

This year, the topic for debate was "This house would start a new cold war with China" in keeping with our new practice of finding topics relevant to current events that have a historical connection with Sir Winston Churchill and his legacy. Two of our board members, Mark Milke and Natasha Halikowski, were able to attend and judge online at the debate.

### Beginner Teams

- 1 Andrew Xu and Jessica Xu - Churchill
- 2 Stephen Mitchell and Sam Ross - Rundle
- 3 Grace Du and Jaime Gao - Churchill

### Beginner Speakers

- 1 Stephen Mitchell - Rundle
- 2 Grace Du - Churchill
- 3 Sam Ross - Rundle

### Open Teams

- 1 Paul Singh and Lachlan Van Egmond - Westmount
- 2 Michael Xu and Zaeem Lone - Webber
- 3 Henry Yang and Nicole Cohen - Churchill

### Open Speakers

- 1 Lachlan Van Egmond - Westmount
- 2 Henry Yang - Churchill
- 3 Zaeem Lone - Webber

Feedback from our members was that the event was very well run and went smoothly despite the somewhat uncharted territory of the online format. The final debate in the Open category in particular was reported to be of excellent quality and very entertaining. We are grateful to the teachers and volunteers who made this event happen despite all of the challenges this year brought.

## Mount Royal University Moot Court Report - Lori Williams

Mount Royal University's Moot Court Exercise focuses on the intersection of law, politics, and the judicial process through examination of historical Supreme Court of Canada decisions. Closely following Supreme Court procedure, teams of student lawyers argue their case to a panel of student justices led by volunteer Chief Justices (sitting justices from the Court of Appeal, Court of Queen's Bench or Provincial Court) and a decision is rendered. Students also have the opportunity to collaborate with/be coached by experienced lawyers as they prepare for the moot hearing, which is held at the Calgary Courts Centre. The Moot Court hearing is an appeal of a recent Charter of Rights and Freedoms decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to a fictional higher court.

On November 26th, 2020 students in MRU's Moot Court exercise appealed the Supreme Court of Canada's December 2017 decision in *R. v. Marakah*, whether privacy rights extend to text messages sent to another's phone. The issue in this case was whether the sender of text messages had an objectively reasonable expectation of privacy in those messages on an accomplice's phone. The SCC majority found that such a right did exist, that the search uncovering text messages implicating Mr. Marakah in firearms trafficking violated his s. 8 right against unreasonable search and seizure, and excluded the evidence under s. 24(2). There was a vigorous dissent at the SCC, providing a rich foundation for debate in our moot hearing. The majority of student justices allowed the appeal in part. They agreed with the SCC that there was a s.8 violation, but concluded that the evidence should be admitted under s.24(2), since without it the Crown's case was eviscerated, and Mr. Marakah would be acquitted. 'Chief Justice' Jolaine Antontio from Alberta's Court of Appeal presided over our virtual moot hearing. The winning students who split the Churchill Society's \$2,000 awards were Diamond Reid, Emilio Guajardo Garza, and Hamed Sayadi.

## The Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project: Statue unveiling delayed until D-Day anniversary, June 6, 2022 - Heather Coleman

The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary's Leadership Initiative and Statue Project began several years back just as an idea. Since then, we have managed to raise significant funds from a wide cross-section of Calgarians, other Canadians and also our patron, Randolph Churchill III also kindly donating.

Donations have ranged from five dollars to five-figure donations.

Alas, while we had hoped to have the statue complete and ready to erect by August 2021, the Covid-induced delays mean that the foundry to be used by Edmonton sculptor Danek Mozdzenski is "backed up" and the completed statue will be ready later this year. The Board has thus decided to aim for the D-Day anniversary, June 6<sup>th</sup>, in 2022. This will also give us more time for community consultations, fundraising, and outreach, especially as Covid restrictions ease.

Nonetheless, the Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project has forged ahead. In recent months:

- Edmonton sculptor Danek Mozdzenski has completed a maquette of the statue. We have chosen to depict Sir Winston Churchill in an active pose at middle age, capturing the determination and fortitude he used to galvanize the Allied forces.
- **We have raised more than \$275,000 of the \$300,000 goal for the statue and its ongoing maintenance.**
- Money raised above \$300,000 will go to a new leadership speakers' series open to all Calgarians.
- We have actively been working at finding a good location and gathering together our proposal.

Pandemic restrictions have delayed our progress on all fronts, but we have plans in place to move ahead once restrictions lift with in-person fundraising activities to raise the dollars needed to complete the statue and leadership speaker series goals (approximately \$225,000), submit the necessary placement proposals, and further engage with stakeholders, including Calgarian residents and businesses who neighbour the proposed statue site. We hope to announce more details about the unveiling location and date in the coming months.

The picture opposite is the small-scale statue created by Danek Mozdzenski and will, in full-size form, be nine feet tall. To see more, including the bust and video of the maquette of the statue, please refer to the [Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project page](http://www.churchillcalgary.ca/statue.html) at [www.churchillcalgary.ca/statue.html](http://www.churchillcalgary.ca/statue.html)



### How you can help support the leadership and legacy of Winston Churchill

- **Donate directly online or through the mail:** We have created a brochure with a synopsis of the project. It is available online both as a [separate web page](#) and as a [downloadable PDF](#) with a mailable donation form. We welcome any donation, modest or generous.
- **Meet with us in person or virtually** if you would like us to meet up online through Zoom or in person with someone you think may like to support the leadership and legacy of Winston Churchill,
- **Arrange for one of the Churchill Society board members to give a talk**, in-person or virtually, about the Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project.
- Send us a supportive note for public location in the city of Calgary.

Please email us at [WinstonChurchillAB@gmail.com](mailto:WinstonChurchillAB@gmail.com) and a board member will be in touch.

You can also donate directly at [www.churchillcalgary.ca/statue.html](http://www.churchillcalgary.ca/statue.html).

## Why Calgary needs a statue of Winston Churchill

Mark Milke, *Calgary Herald*, November 7, 2020

A few years back, the president of the Gandhi Society of Calgary and I publicly discussed how we should think about historical figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Winston Churchill.

The late British prime minister and the non-violent Indian barrister who pressed for Indian independence were both world-consequential figures — take away either man from the 20th century and the world would have been less free and less flourishing in their absence.

I'll offer thoughts shortly on how we might ponder history's leaders, flaws and all, but first, consider why the Churchill Society of Calgary has commissioned a statue of Churchill that we hope will grace some prominent Calgary location next summer.

One obvious reason to commemorate Winston Churchill 75 years after the end of the Second World War is his wartime leadership. Churchill's 1930s stance on the existential danger that Nazi Germany posed to freedom and minorities deserves to be permanently remembered. Hundreds of Calgarians and nearly 45,000 Canadians died fighting Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Absent Churchill's courage and bloody-mindedness amidst appeasers, their soldierly sacrifices early in the war could have been in vain.

### Churchill's connection to Alberta

Another reason is Churchill's connection to southern Alberta. Churchill and his son Randolph visited Canada in the summer of 1929, as part of their three-month North American tour. In Alberta, they visited Edmonton and Calgary, the Prince of Wales Ranch, the Turner Valley oil fields and the Rockies.

According to Bradley Tolppanen in his book, [Churchill in North America, 1929](#), Churchill was fascinated by southern Alberta and its great potential. He wrote to his wife, Clementine, of how he planned to buy shares in Alberta-based oil companies and suggested that he might even buy a ranch and move to Alberta if Neville Chamberlain ever became prime minister. (Chamberlain did, in 1937, but Churchill thankfully stayed in London to eventually take over as prime minister in May 1940.)

Churchill the painter came to love Alberta for other reasons connected to his aesthetic side, which explains his fondness for Banff, Lake Louise and Emerald Lake.

His visit to Alberta produced multiple paintings including one repatriated to Alberta [in 2018](#).

There are other reasons why Calgarians today should cherish Churchill: because while he was a man of his time and all that that implies, he was also ahead of it, and often learned from his own mistakes.

Churchill's views — both ones we would oppose or support today — should be addressed. While ahead of contemporaries on some matters, he held unsupportable ones on issues such as imperialism and had a mixed record on race.

That noted, some of Churchill's positions are more understandable with context. For example, he opposed Indian independence because he saw India as akin to Europe — divided in governance, religion and much else and incapable of uniting. He was also fearful of bloodshed if Britain left. Churchill was wrong about India's potential for eventual unity but tragically right about the initial post-independence bloodshed.

We should consider Churchill's other actions, early and late in life, that contributed to human freedom and flourishing and should round out our views of him today.

Early on, as historian Andrew Roberts noted in his recent biography, Churchill opposed South African Boer racists and argued that Black South Africans should be given legal equality with whites. Also, when American troops landed in Great Britain during the Second World War, Churchill refused an American military request that segregation be enforced against Black military personnel in pubs and restaurants with white American troops.

Churchill was a classic liberal and saw individuals as individuals first, which meant he often, eventually defaulted to positions that took into account the needs of those too often ignored by his aristocratic colleagues.



Examples abound. In his career, Churchill denounced an anti-Jewish bill that meant to prevent Jewish immigration from Russia; he believed governments have a duty to protect minorities against what he called “a petty white community”, and he wanted Indian minorities, the Untouchables and Muslims, protected from the majority population.

### Churchill as a social reformer

Churchill’s individualism and ability to think outside the box — a trait of leaders, not followers — also explains his early advocacy for social reforms.

As Ian Holloway, dean of the University of Calgary law school describes [Churchill's early positions](#), he fought for unemployment insurance, pensions and a minimum wage for garment workers. In short, Churchill favoured the “left-out millions.” That was evident decades before he visited the ruins of East London during the Second World War after German bombs ripped into working-class neighbourhoods.

To propose a Winston Churchill statue in an era when some statues are being attacked might seem odd. But this actually is the right time to do so because it allows us all to ponder how best to consider historical figures. For example, if we oppose commemorating those whose views are not in perfect accord with today, we must then shy away from celebrating the Famous Five suffragists, given they endorsed eugenics. Or consider Gandhi’s errors. He [advised](#) German Jews, after Kristallnacht, to practice non-violence toward the German SS. He also wrote Hitler in 1941 to inform him that he, Gandhi, did not “believe that you are the monster described by your opponents.”

The suffragists were wrong on eugenics but right to demand freedom, equality of opportunity and the vote; Gandhi was wrong to suggest pacifism to European Jews and on Hitler, but was right to campaign for Indian independence: It is possible to make distinctions and to admire long-dead men and women for what they achieved, despite their other views and advocacy with which we should vehemently disagree.

The key question we should pose to historical figures is not, “Did their every view or remark perfectly align with us today?” That is an impossible standard for them and us. Instead, the useful question to ask is: Did they contribute to human freedom and flourishing in their era?

The answer — if one gazes at U.S. Civil War Confederate generals who fought to retain slavery, or Hitler, who was a tyrant — is no. But the answer for

suffragists, Gandhi and Churchill is unquestionably yes.

In an age where historical figures are turned into cardboard characters without nuance, we should also recall Churchill’s other two traits: His tears and humour. Churchill, in an age where Brits valued a stiff upper lip, cried often. He did so when he saw the devastation of war and the fruits of peace. For example, he sobbed while walking through the streets of Paris after liberation. On humour: “I could not live without champagne,” he told a friend in 1946. “In victory, I deserve it; in defeat, I need it.”

### Churchill’s timeless values

Lastly, Churchill’s battle for a world free from tyranny is yet relevant today. When I visited Hong Kong in 2013 to meet politicians, business people and others, almost to a person, they told me they wanted three unique aspects from Hong Kong’s British era in relation to the repressive regime in Beijing: the rule of law, capitalism and democracy. Those inheritances are valued because they allow freedom and individuals to flourish as individuals.

It is why during the protests against a Beijing government, Hong Kong students and others have regularly [raised the British flag](#) and even scrawled “[We shall never surrender](#)” across a signboard. What Churchill fought for — human freedom and flourishing — is yet relevant today. Churchill is a timeless symbol of freedom and democracy and why a permanent tribute — a statue — is what we hope to erect in Calgary.

*Mark Milke is president of the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary. The Calgary Herald has partnered with the society since its inception in 1966, created in part by then Herald publisher Frank Swanson and Vera Swanson. To find out more about the Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue project and his 1929 visit to western Canada, see <https://www.churchillcalgary.ca/>*



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## The Society's Mission Statement

*The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary exists to promote students' facility in the use of the spoken and written word emphasizing oratorical and communication skills as exemplified by the debates, speeches and writings of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill.*

*The Society also exists to preserve and promote the legacy of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill, including his achievements in the face of tyranny and the preservation of freedom, and in so doing commemorate his leadership and achievements.*

Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary

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