



# A NEW MISSION FOR JULIE PAYETTE



On July 13, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that Julie Payette will become Canada's 29th governor general. The 53-year-old former astronaut takes on the new mission this fall, when David Johnston, the current governor general, steps down. She will be the fourth woman to assume the role.

"From the first moment the idea came up, it was obvious to me that she would make an extraordinary governor general," said the Prime Minister. "She is unquestionably qualified."

## TALENT AND HARD WORK

The Montreal native speaks both English and French, as well as Russian, Spanish, Italian, and German.

As a two-time shuttle astronaut, Ms. Payette is an accomplished scientist, engineer, and licenced pilot. She is also a skilled scuba diver, a gifted athlete, and a talented singer and musician who has performed with the Montreal Symphony and the

## FROM ARISTOCRATS TO ASTRONAUTS

Canada is a constitutional monarchy. We govern the country according to our own constitution, with the reigning king or queen of England as our head of state.

The governor general stands in for the monarch on state occasions. Though the role is largely ceremonial today, that wasn't always the case.

From 1867 to 1952, Canada's governors general were British aristocrats with titles like 'duke' or 'lord'. In the early years, Canada's government had autonomy over internal affairs, but the monarch, communicating via the governor general, had the final say on foreign affairs. As we matured from colony to country, the balance began to shift, and so did the role of the governor general.

In 1952, the first Canadian governor general, a diplomat named Vincent Massey, was appointed. His successor, Georges-Philéas Vanier, was a decorated military officer. Subsequent governors general alternated between francophone and anglophone, changing every five years or so, a tradition that continues today.

The prime minister usually selects a governor general from a shortlist of candidates. Royal approval is a formality.

celebrated Tafelmusik Chamber Choir in Toronto. In 2010, she carried the Olympic flag at the opening of the Vancouver Winter Olympics.

## DIPLOMACY AND DUTY

The skills and experiences that made Ms. Payette one of Canada's top

astronauts should serve her well as governor general. She will play an ambassadorial role, hosting foreign heads of state and paying them official visits in return. She'll also represent Canada at domestic events, ceremonies, and official visits.

## DEFINITIONS

**AMBASSADOR:** an authorized representative or messenger

**ARISTOCRAT:** a person of high social rank

**AUTONOMY:** freedom from external control or influence; independence

**CONSTITUTION:** the basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it

**DIPLOMAT:** an official representing a country abroad



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Her duties include giving **royal assent** to new laws and swearing in the prime minister, other elected officials, and Supreme Court justices. She delivers the **throne speech** that officially opens every new session of Parliament. She also dissolves Parliament when a government's time is up.

"It is a critical **non-partisan** role that can have a direct effect on the stability of Canada's government," said Andrew Scheer, the new leader of the federal Conservative Party.

Canada's governor general is also **Commander-in-Chief** of the Canadian Armed Forces, and she has the honour of awarding military medals and civilian honours like the **Order of Canada**.

## HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Astronauts often sleep in very small places. Governors general, however, have a bit more room to spread their wings. Ms. Payette will perform many of her duties at one of her two official residences. Rideau Hall in Ottawa is a gracious 175-room residence surrounded by a 35-hectare park. An elegantly furnished wing of the historic Citadelle of Quebec is also at her disposal.

Both residences will fly the Governor General's flag if she is present.

## HIGH PRAISE

Although Prime Minister Trudeau had a list of several promising candidates

## GO FOR LAUNCH

When Julie Payette was a child growing up in Montreal, she watched the Apollo space missions on TV. She listened as Neil Armstrong, the first person on the moon, declared "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

"Someday," she promised herself, "that will be me."

In 1992, Ms. Payette got her chance. That year, the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) put out the call for new astronauts and received 5330 applications for only four spots in the program.

Marc Garneau, the Federal Minister of Transport, was on the selection committee. "We recognized that she was somebody with tremendous talent," said the former astronaut. "It was a no-brainer."

She flew her first mission in 1999, aboard the space shuttle *Discovery*. The new mission specialist helped to build the **International Space Station (ISS)**, operating the Canadarm robotic arm.

From 2000 to 2007, she served as Chief Astronaut of the CSA. Then, in 2009, she visited the space station again, this time as a crew member of the space shuttle *Endeavour*.

By the time she retired from the CSA, she'd spent 611 hours in space and travelled a total distance of 16 million kilometres. She was the second Canadian woman in space, after Roberta Bondar, and the first Canadian aboard the ISS.

to consider, Ms. Payette was the only person he interviewed for the position.

"I know that Mme. Payette is going to make an extraordinary governor general. She represents the very best of Canadian values: openness to the world, curiosity, intellectual rigour and inspiration. She will continue to inspire generations of Canadians as she represents us at the very highest level."

"I am very happy to have a second chance to represent Canada," Ms. Payette said in response. "I have done so for years as an astronaut in outer space, and now I have the chance to do so again, but this time on Earth.

"I'm here to serve all Canadians of all backgrounds, of all walks of life, either new or not so new. It will be my pleasure." ★

## DEFINITIONS

**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF:** an officer in charge of all of the armed forces of a country, or a major subdivision of them

**HECTARE:** a unit of area equal to 10,000 square metres

**INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION:** an orbiting space station used for scientific and space research, constructed between 1998 and 2011 by 15 nations

**NON-PARTISAN:** not supporting or controlled by a political party, special interest group, or the like

**ORDER OF CANADA:** established in 1967 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System, and recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation

**ROYAL ASSENT:** the official approval of the sovereign, required for the passage of all legislation under English parliamentary law

**THRONE SPEECH:** a prepared speech read to members of Parliament when a session is opened, outlining the government's agenda and focus for the forthcoming session