

**Montreal, October 30, 2004** - For the fourth consecutive year, Carrefour des Communautés du Québec held its Presentation of the multi-cultural Medals of Art, Trade & Professions, during a Gala Dinner at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Montreal, under the patronage of The Honorable Jacques Saada, Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec and Minister responsible for the Francophonie. Mrs. Michelle Courchesne, Quebec Minister of Relations with the Citizens and of Immigration, and Mr. Gérald Tremblay, Mayor of Montreal co-pressed this important event that promotes multiculturalism. Mrs. Pierrette Wong, Vice-President of the United Chinese Community Centre of Montreal was Honorary President of the Gala.

Mrs Louise Major, Mayor of Rawdon His Excellency Souraya Otmani, Consul of Morocco and His Excellency M. Folhadela de Macedo Oliveira, Consul of Portugal, were amongst the official guests of the head table.

Presenters : Marcel Leboeuf a well known Comedian, Georges Berberi, VP Communication of Carrefour, and Monika Mazur, Communication coordinator. This Gala night, at Ritz Carlton, with about 300 participants, was a great succes.

A special tribute was paid to The Honorable Martin Cauchon, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and former Minister Responsible for Quebec, and to Mr. Marcel Tremblay, Associate Advisor to the Mayor for Intercultural Relations in the City of Montreal, for their unfailing support to Quebec's Cultural Communities, through the Carrefour des Communautés du Québec.

Mr. Christian Martin, President of the Carrefour des Communautés du Québec, opened the evening event by quoting Mr. Gordon Nixon, President and CEO, RBC Financial Group who, in a recent speech delivered during a luncheon organized by the

Women's Canadian Club of Montreal, had stated:

"Unlocking the power of diversity will enable Canada to become more competitive and dynamic," he stated. "In a nation as small as Canada, we simply cannot afford to overlook talented and smart people because of gender, ethnic origin or other differences. From a business perspective, diversity is one of our greatest competitive advantages in growing our intellectual capital and ensuring our ability to compete."

"Mr. Nixon's vision meets that of the Carrefour", added Mr. Martin. "By creating a medal to promote the development of multiculturalism, we wanted to recognize the vast talent, the hard work, the creativity, the spirit of enterprise, the ability to adapt and the incredible determination that our immigrants display. We wish to hold them up as role models for the newly arrived ones. I would urge the businessmen and businesswomen present here tonight to remain aware to the importance of ethno-cultural differences within their companies. That diversity is a motor of strength for the industry and trade activities of both Quebec and Canada.

Mayor Gérald Tremblay congratulated Carrefour, its President and his entire team for their untiring efforts to promote intercultural cooperation within the city of Montreal. Mr. Tremblay reiterated his personal commitment to grant a wide representation to the different ethno-cultural groups, within the City of Montreal.

Minister Michelle Courchesne noted the exemplary work of Carrefour. She confirmed that her government is studying the possibility of passing new legislation to allow for the recognition of the diplomas held by newcomers, which would represent a major

step forward towards the integration of immigrants in professional life. The audience reacted with great enthusiasm to Mr. Courchesne's announcement.

The Honourable Jacques Saada congratulated Mr. Martin, President of the Carrefour des Communautés du Québec for the success of his organization. He said, "Mr. Martin, you can be proud of the work done by your team." Mr. Saada noted the remarkable nature of the event by adding, "Look around, Ladies and Gentlemen, tonight you are in the United Nations. Carrefour has succeeded in the wonder of bringing together here tonight people from all origins, from all religions and from all backgrounds, to socialize together. Thank you Carrefour! You are giving us hope for the future, by giving us the demonstration that this is possible. We can no longer talk of multiculturalism, but rather of interculturalism. Carrefour is in politics, in the noble sense of the term. The actions of Carrefour are in the spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Fifteen Medallists, amongst them, M. Michel Adrien Mayor of Mont-Laurier Qc, M. Ulrick Chérubin, Mayor of Amos Qc. And Jun Kin Wong Président of the Chinese Community, were honoured for their talent, their involvement in the community, their exemplary integration and their contribution to the development of the Province of Quebec and of Canada, as well as for their efforts to promote intercultural cooperation. The evening ended with the nomination of three finalists for the 2004 Oscar, and the three nominees were:

1. Mrs. Madeleine Féquière, Manager, Credit Services, Abitibi Consolidated Inc.
2. Mr. Abdelmajid Jamaledine, President and CEO, Zinda Products Inc.
3. Mr. Duarte M. da Ponte Miranda, Vice-President, Trade – RBC Financial Group

Mr. Duarte M. da Ponte Miranda, Vice-President, Trade, RBC Financial Group, was awarded the 2004 Oscar. In his accepting remarks, Mr. Miranda gave a moving testimony of his life experience, and he captivated his audience and raised everyone's awareness to the challenges that immigrants must face and to the difficulties that they need to overcome. He added that the integration process of newcomers is largely facilitated, however, by the renowned generosity and hospitality of Canada and of Canadians. Mr. Miranda closed his remarks by referring to a comment by Quebec poet, Gilles Vigneault, who, in a recent television interview, stated that he did not like to think of himself as a "québécois de souche" (literally meaning tree (roots) stump, sometimes used to refer to Quebecers descending from the French people that had come to Quebec). Mr. Vigneault had said that he would rather speak in terms of the entire tree, and its branches and leaves. Mr. Miranda added his own view of the expression by saying that "Members of Quebec's ethno-cultural groups are part of the branches and the leaves that contribute to the growth and to the development of the big tree represented by Quebec, growing in a fertile soil called Canada."