



THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO
LA LIEUTENANTE-GOUVERNEURE DE L'ONTARIO

TO MANY ONTARIANS THE GREAT LAKES ARE ICONIC — a symbol of our identity, our heritage and our future prosperity.

In 2015-16 I was pleased to host *Identity: Art Inspired by the Great Lakes* in the Lieutenant Governor's Suite at Queen's Park. The exhibition brought together diverse artistic perspectives on our complex relationship with the Great Lakes. I was delighted that over 11,000 Ontarians saw the exhibition in person, with more enjoying it online.

The exhibition was an evocative experience for many visitors: the works invariably elicited touching stories about personal connections to this unique inland sea. It was a reminder that the Great Lakes are an important nexus in our collective experience and a defining presence in our daily lives.

Just as a multitude of rivers and streams gravitate toward the Lakes, we find ourselves drawn to these bodies of water. Our motivations may be varied — recreation, commerce, sustenance, leisure, and conservation are among them — but we share a common concern for their vitality and majesty. This concern is not new and we have much to learn from Indigenous peoples — the original and continuing stewards of the Lakes.

GREATNESS will emphasize and build on this multitude of motivations as the basis for engaging a broad community. It will provide

a focal point for many initiatives and a framework to articulate a greater sense of fellowship and cooperation. New symbols will help forge an overarching identity rooted in shared concern for the Great Lakes and bring this passion to a wider audience. By gathering under a bigger tent, established groups will be able to invite more people into their community. In time, it may contribute to a greater collective recognition that we are truly a Great Lakes people, not simply people living on the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes derive their greatness from the fact that multiple bodies of water are joined to create an aquatic ecosystem of truly grand scale. It is only fitting that the groups committed to protecting the Great Lakes should connect in a similar fashion to realize a greater community and potential. In that way, "greatness" will not only describe the Lakes themselves, but the coalition of citizens who care and nurture them.

The price of greatness is responsibility.
WINSTON CHURCHILL

The Honourable
ELIZABETH DOWDESWELL
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario