

*Citation read on the occasion of the granting of the degree of
Honorary Doctor of Laws to
Stephanie Nolen
by the Senate of the University of Victoria*

November 10, 2014

Mr. Chancellor, it is my privilege to introduce Stephanie Nolen, foreign correspondent for Canada's national newspaper, the Globe & Mail, distinguished journalist and author.

Equipped with a degree in journalism from the University of King's College, Halifax, and a Master of Science from the London School of Economics, Stephanie set out with instant success as a freelance in Jerusalem, regularly contributing to The Independent of London and Newsweek among others. Then she moved to Maclean's, and finally to the Globe & Mail. She spent five years in Johannesburg, where she opened the Globe's Africa Bureau, and a similar spell in New Delhi, covering South Asia. Now assigned to Latin America, she comes to us from Rio de Janeiro. To date, she has reported from more than seventy countries. Stephanie's official description as "foreign correspondent," in no way prepares us for the breadth and brilliance of her career.

She was in Beirut while the Lebanese people endured eleven hundred air raids, in Afghanistan during the fall of the Taliban, in Iraq at the toppling of Saddam Hussein. She witnessed the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, the recruitment of child soldiers in Uganda, political atrocities in Zimbabwe, the civil war in Sri Lanka, the rise of Islamic extremism in Pakistan, war crimes in Bangladesh. Now she reports on the fight for social justice in South American slums, and the preservation of the Brazilian rainforest and its people. She takes on the world's most intractable problems and terrifying trouble spots.

"See for yourself" is her operating principle. Go where the story is and get in deep. The longer you are there, the more questions you ask, the closer you get to the truth. And uncomfortably dangerous that often is. Shrapnel is only the most obvious hazard. Stephanie has swum through swamps in Sudan, and ridden a motorbike two days through the trackless wastes of East Congo, where the ravages of war left nothing intact, not even a road. In the cause of entry into forbidden territory, she has even successfully pretended to be a birdwatcher.

Asked if she is ever afraid, she quotes Martha Gellhorn, the war correspondent who is her idol: NO, because I am angry, every minute. But when Stephanie writes, that anger is articulated with grace and sensitivity; she is never strident, however appalling every vivid detail which cuts to the heart.

Stephanie promotes solutions. She found time to write *28: Stories of AIDS in Africa* (one story for every million HIV-infected people). *28: Stories* was published in eleven countries, translated into seven languages, nominated for the Governor-General's award, and winner of the PEN "Courage" prize.

The honours heap up: Stephanie is a four-time winner of the Amnesty International Award for Human Rights Reporting, and has won seven of Canada's National Newspaper Awards. This year, her three-year project, which examined caste and discrimination in India by focusing on a highly successful school for girls of the lowest caste, was awarded the prestigious Ramnath Goenka Award for Excellence in Journalism.

Stephanie's boundless curiosity has resulted in two other books on totally dissimilar topics. *Promised the Moon* is *The Untold Story of the First Women in the Space Race*. The other, *Shakespeare's Face*, is the detective story of a portrait, traditionally of Shakespeare, which was stowed away in the same family for four centuries until it turned up under a bed in Ottawa.

What we celebrate Stephanie for today is a remarkable accumulation of achievement in one so youthful, but especially for the bravery, determination and industry with which she upholds the highest standards of her profession. A citizen of the world, still deeply connected to the country of her birth, Stephanie re-awakens our moral conscience through the passion and integrity of her writing.

Mr. Chancellor, I have the honour to present Stephanie Nolen for the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

Written and presented by
Prof. Judith Terry
Professor Emeritus
Department of English
Faculty of Humanities
University of Victoria