



No. 90

May 11, 1992

McDOUGALL PRESENTS AWARD FOR CONSULAR EXCELLENCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, at a ceremony held today in Ottawa, honoured the recipient of the first Minister's Award for Consular Excellence. The winner of the Award is Brian Casey, Counsellor and Consul at the Canadian Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Mrs. McDougall recognized Mr. Casey for his performance during the ongoing crisis in the war-torn areas of Yugoslavia and its former republics, and his tireless efforts to ensure the safety of Canadians living or travelling in the area. Despite the adverse conditions and serious communication problems, he and his consular staff kept in constant contact with the Canadian community, providing support, encouragement and up-to-the-minute travel information to help them leave if necessary.

"The consular program in Belgrade has been under considerable pressure throughout the crisis," said Mrs. McDougall. "Under Mr. Casey's skilful and sensitive management, the welfare of Canadians has been exceptionally well served."

At the same ceremony, four employees of External Affairs and International Trade Canada -- Salwa Assily, locally engaged employee of the Canadian Embassy in Damascus, based in Beirut; Hazel Fraser, Consular Training Officer at Headquarters; Peter Lilius, Counsellor and Consul at the Canadian Embassy in Riyadh; and Nicholas Wise, Director of Central Operations at the Passport Office -- were recognized with Ministerial Citations for outstanding consular service to the Canadian public at home and abroad. Special citations were presented, on a one-time basis, to two Canadian Embassies (Riyadh and Tel Aviv) because of their exceptional team efforts during the Gulf War. Two locally engaged staff -- Mirjana Majerovic-Vujnovic in Zagreb,

Croatia, and Emilija Krnjajski in Belgrade -- received departmental merit awards.

The Minister's Award for Consular Excellence will be presented annually and will recognize employees whose devotion and steadiness over a period of time have made a valuable contribution to the consular program. The Award is unique in that eligible recipients include Canada-based employees, locally engaged staff at Canadian missions abroad, Canadian citizens providing consular services abroad on a volunteer basis, Canada's Honorary Consuls and Passport Office employees.

The Award was instituted as part of the department's Consular Awareness Program, launched in April 1991. This major program is part of the ongoing efforts to inform Canadian travellers about consular services.

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