

February 2, 2004

Friends,

On Saturday, January 31st, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), in cooperation with the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario held at the Theatre ROM a special event "Zoroastrianism and the Cosmic Battle", to commemorate the UNESCO related event for the 3000th year of Zoroastrian Culture. The ROM theatre was packed with an audience of Zarathushtis and non-Zarathushtis, of all ages. It was heartening to see students in large numbers.

The speakers were Dr Ervad Jehan Bagli, President NAMC who spoke on "The Religion of Zarathushtra in the Archaemenian Era", Gayle Gibson, ROM teacher and President of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities who gave a very animated talk on "Mithras and the Romans" and Prof Jamsheed Choksey, Prof of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University described the "Zoroastrian influence on the Indian Sub-continent". There was a display of literature, books and other publications which were viewed with interest

This special event at the prestigious Royal Ontario Museum, the third and the last in the series of events organized by ZSO was arranged through Dr Ardeshir Dastur.

As we begin to wind down on the celebrations, Zarathushtis across the North American continent should take great pride that this 3000th anniversary initiated by the Government of Tajikistan, was recognised in Ontario by the Royal Ontario Museum, in California by the presence of the District Attorney General of Orange County and in Washington by the Library of Congress. We have Khosro Mehrfar to thank for the interview and expose to Zoroastrianism on CNN for the California event and we have Adi Davar and WZO to thank for the Washington, Library of Congress event.

On December 10th the Director General of UNESCO, Koichiro Matsuura sent a letter to Mr Gifford, the Director of the Scholarly Programs at the Library of Congress granting "UNESCO sponsorship to this scholarly event, I wish every success to the Colloquim and would appreciate receiving a report of its proceeding". He also writes "we welcome your initiative, which honours Zoroastrian Culture and this community's way of life specially in the United States of America. It can be expected to contribute to better understanding of spiritual traditions and hence to intercultural dialogue which is an important part of UNESCO's mission".

Thank you to all who contributed through music, through theatre, through publications, through films, and in whatever way you could to bring awareness of the presence and contributions of Zarathushti community on this continent.

The community has done us proud, We should all rejoice.

Dolly Dastoor
Co-chair, FEZANA 3000th anniversary celebrations sub-committee