Preface
What follows is a document about the Montreal Massacre and some of its legacy, which is based on the presentation given by Dr. Wendy Gentleman at the 2014 December 6th memorial ceremony held by the Dalhousie Undergraduate Engineering Society and the Dalhousie Women in Engineering Society.

Dr. Gentleman is an associate professor in Dalhousie's Department of Engineering Mathematics. In 1989, at the time of the massacre, she was in Montreal, having just begun the first year of her undergraduate in mechanical engineering at McGill University.

This was the fourth such ceremony at which Dr. Gentleman spoke about the massacre, her experiences as a woman in engineering, and her views on how we can honour the victims. Dr. Gentleman chooses to speak at the December 6th memorial ceremony because it has a significance for her personally, and because she recognizes its broader significance for other engineers, women, and Canadians. Dr. Gentleman also recognizes that many among our younger generations do not know about the Montreal Massacre, let alone why they should care. So another reason Dr. Gentleman chooses to speak at the December 6th ceremony is to educate people about our relevant history; she wants them to appreciate why the Montreal Massacre matters to them, why they should learn, and why they should never forget.

From her experiences teaching math to engineering students, and parenting her children, Dr. Gentleman has realized that lessons are more memorable (i.e. education is more effective) when words are accompanied by images and sounds; when lectures are anecdotal, not abstract; when the audience members can personally relate to the material being shown. It was with this mindset that Dr. Gentleman strived to step-up her efforts to educate people about the Montreal Massacre this year, when December 6th marks the 25th anniversary of the tragedy. Her efforts were mainly focused on enabling younger audiences to "remember" a time before they were born.

Dr. Gentleman designed two posters about the massacre that are on display in Dalhousie Engineering's alumni lounge The first is titled "Do you know what happened December 6th 1989?", which summarizes the event and its commemorations. It shows pictures of Dalhousie's memorial plaque and tree of hope, the candle light vigil part of Dalhousie's December 6th ceremony, as well as a photo of the inspirational Montreal Massacre survivor, Nathalie Provost, who was a mechanical engineering student. The second poster is titled "Montreal Massacre Victims" which shows names, faces and stories about each of the 14 slain women.

Dr. Gentleman has also arranged for the Dalhousie community to be able to view the film Polytechnique in a quiet room on campus at a time of their choosing. The film is a portrayal of what happened based on survivors' accounts that was released coincident with the 20th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. Anyone interested in watching the film should contact the Dalhousie Women in Engineering Society or Dalhousie's Engineering Mathematics department. Please consult the faculty administration for contact information.
Dr. Gentleman revised her December 6th ceremony speech from previous years to incorporate more information and turn it into a multi-media presentation. After speaking with audience members who were moved by this year's presentation, and speaking to others who were disappointed that they had been unable to attend on December 6th, Dr. Gentleman decided to expand her reach by making her presentation available online.

*There is no rationale for waiting another full year before again engaging youth, or others, in a discussion about the Montreal Massacre.*

By providing her 2014 December 6th presentation online, the material will be accessible to new and existing Dalhousie engineering students, staff and faculty, as well as to other individuals and institutions at any time.

To improve the ability for the online version to stand alone, Dr. Gentleman elaborated upon her 2014 ceremony presentation, incorporating details from her posters as well as additional information from her online research. It is this elaborated version of the December 6th presentation that she has made available online.

Please note that while most of the text that follows is original writing by Dr. Gentleman, some parts were pieced together from various online sources, and in some places, the text uses phrasing taken verbatim from other articles. Dr. Gentleman wants to emphasize that she is in no way attempting to take credit for others’ work. Rather, she highly appreciates how these other authors have expressed ideas and imagery, and she feels paraphrasing would make the presentation less compelling. Dr. Gentleman has done her utmost to both fact-check and to properly reference other works, but she would appreciate being contacted if readers identify any errors or oversights. She desires to be fair and accurate and will gladly make corrections. In a similar vein, some of the images included here are not original, but are widely available online, and her use of these images is intended to increase the educational effectiveness of the material.

Wendy C. Gentleman
December 11, 2014
Memorial to the Montreal Massacre

Elaboration of the presentation given by Wendy Gentleman at Dalhousie University’s 2014 December 6th ceremony on the 25th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre

Significance of the Montreal Massacre
Today is Canada’s National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, when federal buildings fly flags at half-mast & Canadians wear ribbons of commitment to end violence against women. Parliament made this official designation to commemorate the Montreal Massacre that occurred 25 years ago today. On December 6th 1989, a gunman with a legally obtained rifle killed 14 women and injured 10 other women and 4 men at the École Polytechnique, which is the engineering school of the University of Montreal.

The Montreal Massacre remains Canada’s worst mass murder. It was the first mass school shooting in North America, and remained the North American school shooting with the most victims shot prior to Columbine in 1999, and most victims killed prior to Virginia Tech in 2007. It was the first single-day killing spree in North America where specific types of victims were targeted; it remains North America’s worst gendercide.

The Montreal Massacre renewed interest and commitment to take action to end violence against women, strengthen gun laws, and break down barriers for women in engineering and other male-dominated fields.

Progress was made. For example, a grassroots response to the Montreal Massacre, led by Canadian men, has become the now global White Ribbon Campaign to stop abuse and violence against women. Criticism of the police response to the Montreal Massacre led to changes in their protocols and training. These changes are credited for minimizing the death toll at Montreal’s Dawson College shooting in 2006, and have now been implemented by law-enforcement agencies across Canada. Survivors and families of victims of the Montreal Massacre became leading advocates for gun control. Their landmark
achievement was the passing of Bill C-68, the Firearms Act, in 1995, which included the long-gun registry that was dismantled 2 years ago -- except in Quebec\textsuperscript{14}. After the Montreal Massacre, government and corporate institutions introduced fellowships and internships and altered hiring practices to encourage women to enter and remain in engineering\textsuperscript{15}. Throughout the 1990s, enrollment of women in engineering increased\textsuperscript{10,16}.

Despite such progress, the issues related to the Montreal Massacre -- sadly -- are still as relevant today as they were 25 years ago.

Gun-related violence and violence against women are headline news, this year in particular. For example, on gun related violence this year, there was the Parliament Hill shooting on October 22, when Corporal Nathan Cirillo was fatally shot, coincidentally the same day the House of Parliament was set to read the new Common Sense Firearms Act\textsuperscript{17,18}; the Moncton shootings on June 4, when five RCMP officers were shot, 3 of whom died; and this December 14\textsuperscript{th} marks the second anniversary of heartbreaking Sandy Hook school shooting in the US where 26 people were shot, 20 of whom were children aged 6 and 7. In 2012, there was also the news headline about Halifax having Canada's highest rate of firearm related violent-crime -- nearly double the national average\textsuperscript{19}.

On violence against women, North America has been amazed and atwitter after recent shocking sexual assault scandals related to formerly beloved and seemingly benign celebrities Jian Ghomeshi and Bill Cosby. There have been national headlines this year about Rinelle Harper, the 16 year old who was brutally raped and left for dead in November in Winnipeg; the continuing court cases related to victim Rehtaeh Parsons from Dartmouth and Halifax's Chronicle Herald newspaper's decision to publish her name; and the case of St. Mary's University student, Loretta Saunders, who went missing from Halifax in February and whose body was found two weeks later dumped along the trans-Canada highway in New Brunswick.

There are also shocking present-day statistics about violence against women that don't typically make the news headlines. For example, half of all women in Canada have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16; on average, a women is killed by her domestic partner every 6 days; and women reported >460,000 incidents of sexual assault in 2009\textsuperscript{20}. Similarly relevant, but generally considered non-newsworthy, are the statistics about the women in engineering. For example, women still represent only 18\% of Canadian engineering undergraduates on average, with numbers being as low as 10\% in some provinces and disciplines\textsuperscript{21}.

With no shortage of current events on which to focus your attention on this Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, it is fair to ask why we should hold a December 6th ceremony dedicated to the victims of the Montreal Massacre? Why should you still remember these particular victims of an act of violence that occurred a quarter century ago? It's just history right? But it's your history, and if you know your history, you can better understand your present and shape your future.
My primary goal today is to convey that relevant historical context. I want to take you from where you are now, at Dalhousie on December 6th 2014, back 25 years, to the École Polytechnique on December 6th 1989.

Memorials to the Montreal Massacre
Shortly after 5pm on December 6th 1989, a gunman with a rifle hunted women at the École Polytechnique. He hunted women in classrooms, corridors and the cafeteria, shooting through doors, windows and at point blank range. Ultimately, he slaughtered 14 women, and he injured 10 other women and 4 men before turning the gun on himself23,24.

The media will not let you forget the name or face of the gunman. This December 6th memorial ceremony, along with others being held today all across Canada, are dedicated to ensuring the 14 murdered women are not forgotten.

There are many other kinds of memorials that are also dedicated to remembering the victims of the Montreal Massacre. These include films, plays and songs that tell the story and repeat the murdered victims’ names.

At engineering schools across Canada, there are permanent memorials to the Montreal Massacre. École Polytechnique’s memorial monument is a granite block showing the school logo at the top, and listing the 14 slain women’s names and the date they died, like gravestone. But unlike a normal gravestone, it shows 14 silver bullets, powerfully reminding us that these women did not pass peacefully; they were violently killed.
Dalhousie’s memorial is just outside the main entrance, and we will go there during the candle light part of tonight’s ceremony. Like École Polytechnique, Dalhousie also has a grave-marker like stone, with a brass plaque that lists the victims’ names. Dalhousie has chosen to balance this symbol of death with a living tree of hope.

**The 14 women who died in the Montreal Massacre**

Today, I want you to remember the faces and stories that go with the names. I also encourage you to see the poster "Montreal Massacre Victims" which in the main entryway.

These are the 14 Montreal Massacre victims who were killed on December 6th 1989.

These are the 14 vibrant young women who got up on December 6th 1989, left their apartments where they lived with friends, family and partners, and went to school. It was the last day of classes before exams and there was a buzz about campus. Students were sitting in class, listening to final lectures and giving final presentations. Students were busy photocopying study notes at machines in the school corridors. The school cafeteria was festively decorated with balloons and banners and was offering free wine to celebrate the end of term and upcoming holidays.

Six of these women were 4th year mechanical engineering students, just one term away from graduating. They were planning their holidays, preparing for job interviews, deciding
among existing job offers or planning for graduate school\textsuperscript{32,33}. They were in class listening to a student presentation on heat transfer\textsuperscript{34}.

Four of these women were students in metallurgical engineering (what we now call materials engineering). One was in 4\textsuperscript{th} year about to graduate, two were in 2\textsuperscript{nd} year and one in 1\textsuperscript{st} year. Three were standing at the front of the classroom shown above, two giving a presentation on metals that they had worked on all term\textsuperscript{35,36}.

One woman was a 2\textsuperscript{nd} year civil engineering student, who was taking a break from working on a project in the computer lab to go to the cafeteria with a friend\textsuperscript{37}. One woman was 1\textsuperscript{st} year student in chemical engineering, also in the cafeteria\textsuperscript{38,39}.

One woman was working in the financial services office, which is where she first met her new husband -- a former engineering student -- when he went to to pay his tuition\textsuperscript{40}.

One woman was a nursing student, who had gone to the École Polytechnique cafeteria with her physician husband because it was the cheapest place to eat on campus\textsuperscript{41}.

These were 14 intelligent and intriguing young women. Women who had scholarships, worked as TAs, wanted to extend their existing professional training, and who were working hard to fulfill their life's ambitions. These 14 women were not just passionate about technology, but also the environment, human health, and a variety of extracurricular activities. They were involved in student councils, playing music, singing in choirs, reading literature, and cooking. They participated in athletics such as swimming, basketball, and skiing. These are women who were planning for weddings and trying to have babies\textsuperscript{42,43,44,45}.

These are the 14 women who did not go gentle into that December 6\textsuperscript{th} night; they were victims of violence. Killed in their classrooms: shot en mass after being isolated from their male classmates and professors and trapped in the back corner unable to escape; shot and stabbed on the presentation dais; shot while trying to escape the room; shot while hiding under a desk. Shot through the window in the office door she had just locked. Killed in the cafeteria: one shot at the table where she had been eating; two shot while holding each other tightly in their arms in the place they tried to hide after gunfire rang out\textsuperscript{46,47}.

These are the 14 young women who were beloved daughters, sisters, friends, girlfriends & wives, and it was their lives, their dreams, and the dreams of their friends and families that ended so violently on December 6\textsuperscript{th} 1989.

There are the women you should remember today.

**My Montreal Massacre memory**
Looking around, I see that most you can't "remember" these women because you were very young, maybe not even born, in 1989. Whatever your knowledge of the Montreal Massacre, it has come from someone else's recounting of this tragedy. For you, the Montreal Massacre
is a piece of history. For me, however, it is a profoundly powerful personal memory that is inextricably tied to my career. Because in 1989, when the Montreal Massacre happened, I was there in Montreal having just begun the first year of my mechanical engineering undergraduate at McGill University.

On that December 6th day, 25 years ago, I was doing what many of you have been doing today: studying for final exams. In those days, we didn’t have email, let alone texting, Facebook or Twitter. Most of us didn’t even have TVs in our dorm rooms, but we did have radios. That evening, I was trying to make sense of electromagnetism while listening to pop music, when the radio announcer interrupted the program to say that there had been a mass shooting at the École Polytechnique. Many women were dead and many more were injured.

The early news reports were confused, stating that police believed there were more gunmen who had escaped into Park Mont Royal right behind my residence. I locked my door, terrified, and spent the rest of the evening glued to the radio and on my (corded) telephone to my friends and family for updates. I remember getting a panicked telephone call from my brother in the US, whose local news reported that the shooting was at the university in Montreal (not the University of Montreal), and so he had worried that I was among the victims. I will never forget the sound of relief in my brother’s voice when he realized I was OK, and I imagined how different it would be for the family and friends of the slain women who had their worst fears confirmed.

**Immediate Aftermath**

Despite the clarity of my recollections of that radio announcement and my brother’s telephone call, I don’t remember many of the other events that transpired in the immediate aftermath of the Montreal Massacre. I don’t remember talking to my parents on the telephone. I don’t remember where I stayed those first days. I don’t remember ultimately writing those exams I had been studying for the night of the massacre.

My mind is blank because, in the immediate aftermath of the Montreal Massacre, I was in shock. The entire nation was in shock. No mass shootings like this had ever occurred in Canada. If fact, no school shootings like this had ever occurred anywhere: this was before Sandy Hook, before Virginia Tech, before Columbine. What had previously been unimaginable suddenly became real.

We asked ourselves: What if it had been us? Our sister? Our friend? Our daughter? Our wife? We mourned our loss of innocents and our loss of innocence. We were a shattered nation.

Our profound shock and sorrow united the nation, similar to the way we came together this October over the Parliament Hill shooting. Like we just did for Nathan Cirillo, the nation sought collective solace by publicly sharing our outpouring of grief and paying of respect.
In the immediate aftermath, the Quebec government declared 3 days of mourning\textsuperscript{50}. Quebecers and others across Canada held impromptu vigils for the slain women\textsuperscript{51}.

The University of Montreal set up a Chapel of Rest, laying out 8 of the women’s coffins (some open, some closed) in the same hallway where the slain women had carried their books and their dreams\textsuperscript{52}. This temporary chapel was visited by Quebec’s political leaders from all sides, and it was visited by the public in throngs. Quebecers of both genders and both languages, spanning races, ages, and socio-economic divides came by the thousands, waiting hours in the bitter cold to cry before the coffins of strangers, offering flowers, final prayers and farewells to young women they never knew\textsuperscript{53}. Engineering students taped hundreds of telegrams from around the world to the hallway walls so mourners could read them as they approached the coffins\textsuperscript{54}.

A joint funeral service, offering comfort and official recognition of the tragedy, was held at Montreal’s world-famous Notre Dame basilica for the 9 victims who were Roman Catholic\textsuperscript{55}. That funeral was attended by Canada’s Governor General, the Prime Minister, Quebec’s Premier, Montreal’s mayor, and thousands of other people\textsuperscript{56,57}. Much of the rest of Canada -- including me -- watched the service on TV.

Just as the nation collectively mourned, we also collectively hungered for explanations. We wanted to know what happened, to learn and share the details. We devoured media reports of survivors’ accounts and police findings, and the media’s grisly images of dead bodies and stories of personal tragedies fed our curiosity and morbid fascination\textsuperscript{58}. 

\begin{itemize}
  \item What happened?
  \item Who and Why?
\end{itemize}
We were desperate to know about who did it and why, again thirsting for any new information and drinking up everything that emerged about the gunman’s life before December 6th 1989 and the motives behind his actions\textsuperscript{61}.

It was from the media that I learned the most shocking aspect of the story. The shootings were not random. Rather, the gunman had been targeting women.

\textbf{Clip from CBC archives 1989 news footage describing tragedy, and ending with introduction of Nathalie Provost in her hospital bed, play from beginning and stop at 1m03s:}

\url{http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/CBC+75th_vignettes/ID/2157748156/}

While I said my mind was blank to much of what occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Montreal Massacre, I have never forgotten the TV coverage of this woman, Nathalie Provost. She was a student in mechanical engineering, just like me. On the day of the massacre, she had been in sitting in her final class before exams, watching another student giving a presentation\textsuperscript{62}. Hers was the first classroom the gunman entered.

She was one of the 9 women who were in the classroom, the 9 women who were isolated after the gunman fired into the ceiling and demanded the students separate, ordering "girls" to the back corner of the classroom where there was no possible exit, and ordering all the "guys" (50 or so students and 2 professors) out of the room\textsuperscript{63}.

The gunman then asked the women engineering students if they knew why they were there. Nathalie Provost said "no", and the gunman explained, “I am fighting feminism\textsuperscript{64}. You are all a bunch of feminists. I hate feminists\textsuperscript{65}” Nathalie Provost then attempted to defuse the situation by reasoning with the gunman.

\textbf{Clip from CBC archives 1989 news footage of interview with Nathalie Provost from her hospital bed, describing her interaction with the gunman (played as flashback in CBC interview with Nathalie Provost 5 years post-Massacre)}


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\caption{Nathalie Provost, survivor, tried reasoning with the gunman. CBC archives}
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Historic barriers to women in engineering
In 1989 Provost had told the gunman "We are not feminists." She later said that, at that age, she was shocked that women in engineering were seen as symbols of feminism. I certainly shared her view in 1989; I was an engineering student and I too never thought of myself as a feminist. Our views back then had partly to do with our perception at the time of feminists being militants who fought with men, or whose fights were for things like a woman’s right to vote or to have an abortion; fights that no longer needed fighting. Our shared view that, as women studying engineering in 1989, we were not feminists, had mostly to do with our naiveté about what it meant to be a woman in engineering.

Engineering has historically been a male-dominated field, but in 1989 that seemed like irrelevant history. I had been encouraged to study engineering by my parents, teachers, and friends, and I honestly hadn’t given my gender a second thought when it came to choosing my undergraduate discipline. In 1989, Nathalie Provost and I, our classmates and other young women, believed all doors were wide open.

But the Montreal Massacre was our horrific awakening to the fact that even in 1989 there were there were still people who felt that women didn't belong in engineering. Sadly, it wasn't just the views of a single madman. There are real barriers for women in engineering.

We are a minority. After the Montreal Massacre I couldn't help but acknowledge the gender differences in my undergraduate classes: less than 15% of the students were women, and there weren't any female TAs, let alone professors. There weren't even enough women's bathrooms, because the buildings hadn't been designed to accommodate women. Our textbooks referred to an Engineer as “he” and “him”. There was a lack of sensitivity by some of the professors, such as when they put up cartoons of big-breasted women on departmental bulletin boards, or when they made derogatory comments in class, such as how the automatic transmission was invented for women because they couldn’t use a clutch with high heels. Worse, I encountered both professors and practicing engineers that actively discouraged me from continuing my engineering education and becoming an engineer, telling me I was wasting my time, the professors’ time, and my scholarship money because women couldn’t do engineering.

When faced with such overt and insidious examples of sexism that can serve to alienate and erode confidence, my girlfriends and I took inspiration from Nathalie Provost.
Nathalie Provost's inspirational message from her hospital bed

Because -- despite her horrific experience of having had 6 of her female classmates executed in a bloodbath; of watching the eyes of one of her friends close and knowing that woman was dead; of being shot 4 times herself (in the forehead, both legs and a foot); of the extreme terror and pain she and her classmates experienced all simply because they were women engineering students -- Nathalie Provost had the strength and conviction to leave this inspirational message for the rest of us:

Clip from CBC archives 1989 news footage interview with Nathalie Provost in her hospital bed: "The last message" start at 1m03s:
http://www.cbc.ca/player/News/CBC+75th_vignettes/ID/2157748156/

If Nathalie Provost could remain determined given what she had faced, then my fellow women engineering students and I certainly couldn't let our far less significant challenges deter us. We didn't suffer the sexism in silence, we took action: wrote letters, met with university administrators, but most importantly, we stayed.

Changes for women in engineering

We did see change. Over the course of my career, in engineering schools and the workforce, I experienced an increasingly welcoming attitude toward women in engineering. For me, these changes are clocked against the time since the Montreal Massacre.

For example, I remember how the first summer following the Montreal Massacre, I got a job at the National Research Council’s Institute for Mechanical Engineering, and while the entire division were men, they were all very excited and supportive of having a woman there (they even made me my very own bathroom!). One year later, NRC introduced their Montreal Massacre memorial fellowships that awarded 14 new undergraduate women with full tuition and guaranteed job experience.

Five years after the Montreal Massacre, the only trouble that I and the other women in my graduating class had with respect to getting jobs or acceptance at graduate schools was in choosing among our multiple offers. At my engineering graduate school, several professors
were women, and we even had a woman dean. I graduated with my PhD in engineering one decade after the Montreal Massacre.

When I was hired by the faculty of Engineering at Dalhousie, it was at equal pay with a male counterpart hired at the same time. 15 years after the Montreal Massacre, I became the first-ever Dalhousie engineering faculty member to take maternity leave, which I did again two years later. The administration has continued to support my needs as a working mother, especially in regards to understanding and accommodating my time-constraints. I got tenure in the Faculty of Engineering here two decades after the Montreal Massacre. And now, I am one of Dalhousie’s 11 women Engineering faculty members who serve as mentors and role models for today’s women engineering students.

And another role model for today’s women is Nathalie Provost, a surviving victim of the violence of the Montreal Massacre who has continued to inspire others for the last 25 years.

After she recovered from her gunshot injuries, Nathalie Provost returned to École Polytechnique and finished her undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering. She stayed on to complete her master’s degree. She is still in Montreal, now the director of a strategic planning department in the Quebec government. She’s the boss.73 She married another graduate of École Polytechnique, and together they have 4 children. She has also been active in media for 25 years, reminding Canadians of the significance of the Montreal Massacre and the ongoing need to promote women in engineering and other male-dominated fields, to end violence against women and to strengthen gun laws. She has written articles and given compelling interviews. These are available online and I strongly suggest you look them up.

Over the past 25 years, Nathalie Provost has also reflected on her changing perspectives on feminism and her famous quote to the gunman in 1989: "We are not feminists". Prior to the massacre, she had believed there was no difference between men and women.74 But 5 years after the massacre, she acknowledged -- just as I did --- that the most important way the massacre had changed her was by making her realize that she is a woman, that she cannot ignore that fact, and that she must assume what it means.75 Many years later, she -- again like me -- realized that in her life and actions, she is a feminist.76 We know we are feminists by our values, the way we live, the way we raise our children and the ambition we have for them77.
Remembering the women: Appreciating what we lost

Nathalie Provost and I can identify with the 14 victims of the Montreal Massacre, who were our peers, and who – had their lives not been violently cut short – would be like Nathalie and me today, grayer, more wrinkled and with 25 more years of life experiences.

When you see these victims’ photos, contrast them with what you see in Nathalie and me today. See what was lost when the gunman extinguished these glowing lives and futures. See the career accomplishments that never happened: The buildings they didn’t design, the machines they didn’t create, the products they never imagined, and the youth they didn’t mentor. See the friends they didn’t laugh with, the vacations they didn’t take, the houses they didn’t buy, the weddings that never happened, and the children they never got to birth and raise. See all the roles of womanhood that were left vacant. See 14 fewer role models for today’s young women.

Today’s December 6th ceremony is a memorial to these 14 women who died violently in the Montreal Massacre 25 years ago. The brutal killing of these 14 innocent women was a loss of innocence for Canada. Their loss was a death in their families, deaths in the family of engineers, deaths in the family of women, and deaths in the family of Canadians.

We should all remember the Montreal Massacre victims for the same reason we visit graveyards and other memorial monuments. Memorials represent our sadness and our anger, and provide an occasion for remembrance and reflection on how those losses have shaped our lives. Memorials to the Montreal Massacre acknowledge what we all lost and how that hole was a result of brutal violence.

Taking action: Creating living memorials

And while gravestone-like memorials that list names and dates of death are powerful symbols, I personally prefer living memorials, like Dalhousie’s tree of hope. Because these help us to remember that we can find outlets for our sorrow and outrage that achieve positive change. Living memorials symbolize how we can use knowledge of our past to understand our present and shape our future.

As I said at the beginning of this presentation, the Canadian Government commemorated the Montreal Massacre by declaring December 6th as the Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against women. By flying federal building flags at half-mast we remember all women victims of violence; by wearing ribbons we commit to take action to eliminate it.

By committing to take action, we are in effect, turning ourselves into living memorials. We are living symbols of hope for positive change.

I said that my goal for today’s December 6th memorial ceremony was to provide the relevant history, the context by which you can appreciate why you should be sad and angry. Why you should remember.

That was only one goal.
I end my part of this December 6th memorial ceremony with my other goal: a call to action. I want to create living memorials to the Montreal Massacre. Not a tree of hope, but a forest of committed people.

**Seeds of change for young women**
The first seed I want to plant for this living memorial is directed to the young women in this room.

Knowing about these 14 victims can inspire others. That inspiration is particularly poignant for those of you who are undergraduate women in engineering, who can see reflections of yourselves in the victims’ portraits because you are at the same point in your engineering career as were the slain female students at École Polytechnique in 1989.

For you young women engineering students, the Montreal Massacre is of particular historical significance. I pray that such a violent history will never be repeated, and that you young women engineers will not face the sexism experienced by your predecessors. Certainly in the decades since the tragedy, the culture of engineering has become more welcoming and accepting. But women engineers are a still very much a minority, and you will undoubtedly face gender-related obstacles in your career path; it can be difficult to be a working woman, particularly a field dominated by men. But you young women will not be facing those challenges alone; you are part of a community that includes women and men for whom the Montreal Massacre is a personal memory and who are dedicated to ensuring there are resources and opportunities for women in engineering.

![Image](image.jpg)

The legacy of the 14 women killed in the Montreal Massacre is not restricted to women in engineering alone. That is because the best way to honour the memory of Montreal Massacre victims is for today’s young women – engineering students and others, including my own daughter – to fulfill the aborted dreams of those 14 women, their families and their friends. For you young women to become the victims’ living legacy, enabling them to survive through your actions.

You young women can be living memorials by engaging in rewarding vocations (i.e. be "employed" at something for which you are passionate), following fulfilling life paths (i.e.
engage in diverse activities that offer you personal satisfaction) and embracing all your roles of womanhood: as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers, friends.

They say with age comes wisdom; I would say with age comes a broader perspective. From my 2014 perspective, I now know that being a feminist is not about "fighting to prove you are best of the men" (to quote the English version of Nathalie Provost's response to the gunman 25 years ago). Being a feminist is about wanting to be treated fairly and with respect, and about taking pride in your female gender. My living memorial list of actions is my definition of feminism. Every woman should want to declare that she is a feminist. Young women: take pride in your feminism.

**Seeds of change for all of us**
The second seed I want to plant for this living memorial is directed to all us -- young and old, women and men.

All of us must commit to empowering and encouraging our young women to persevere through life's challenges, and to find their fulfilling life paths.

We also need to celebrate gender differences: Gender does matter, and gender differences do exist. Men and women have different perspectives, ways of thinking, understanding and communicating. But these gender differences -- just as our other differences -- should be embraced. Humanity is bettered by such differences.

Last, but certainly not least, I believe the best living memorial to the Montreal Massacre is for all of us to take actions toward ensuring women, men and children are safe, to making this a more peaceful world.

**One last memorial message**
As my last message: I’d like to share with you another memorial, a song written by Bev Nicol and Lisa Dorian as a tribute to the Montreal Massacre victims. To me, it is a beautiful commemoration, putting the story and the names to music in a moving and memorable way. Our lives are the compilation of the memories we carry with us; this song helps to ensure the victims and the event will not be forgotten, that as the final lyric says "We will survive".

**Link to Youtube release of song**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liRkcP3FXpw
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