



BRESCIA HOMECOMING RECOGNIZED YOUNG ALUMNA WITH FIRST ANNUAL AWARD OF MERIT



Brescia University College recognized Tahirih Naylor-Thimm as the first recipient of the newly created Young Alumnae Award of Merit at the Homecoming lunch on Sunday, October 5.

Since delivering the valedictory address at Baccalaureate in 2000, Naylor-Thimm has obtained a law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University. She then articulated with the Director of the Family Responsibility Office (a division of Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services).

Since being called to the bar she has put her legal training to work for the Baha'i community. She worked for the Baha'i Community of Canada in Ottawa, where she supported initiatives relating to human rights and sustainable development. Her work included the researching and writing of proposals to be presented to the federal government and to other non-governmental organizations. In July 2006 she accepted a role at the United Nations in New York City where she leads the

strategic planning and implementation of the Baha'i International Community's involvement in work on the issues of human rights, social development and sustainability.

The delegation she represents is grounded in the Baha'i faith which promotes equality, the oneness of the human race and calls for the abolition of extremes of wealth and poverty. In an interview after learning that she had been selected the recipient of the Young Alumnae Award of Merit, Naylor-Thimm said, "I learned many things at Brescia that influenced my choices in life. First and foremost, I felt that Brescia allowed me to cultivate my commitment to my spiritual values and my religion, the Baha'i faith. At a crucial stage in my life, I saw women who were committed to their beliefs and manifested those beliefs in service to their communities. I wanted a career that allowed me to do this as well."

Naylor-Thimm's vision and values inspired Professor June Matthews to nominate her for the Award. In the nomination submitted by Matthews she wrote, "Tahirih's work on behalf of others began before she attended Brescia. She has long been committed to a life course that will better the condition of those who lack voice and power, and pursued a law degree so that she would be well positioned to make change happen."

Matthews described Naylor-Thimm as an outstanding role model for young women because of her focus and her determination. "Her path is an excellent example of a woman choosing and following a path that will make a difference to others...Tahirih has made conscious decisions along the way to work not for her personal benefit, but for the benefit of others. She is now playing a very public role, engaged in the hard work of research, informing decision-makers, shaping opinion, and trying to channel change in positive directions. Her involvement with human rights, climate change, sustainable development, and poverty eradication demonstrate true leadership."

Giving women access to education and opportunities to become leaders who change the world is integral to Brescia's mission and vision. Naylor-Thimm values her Brescia experience. "When I arrived at Brescia I knew I wanted to do something about the gross injustice and inequities I saw in the world but I wasn't sure how to make this happen. The faculty and staff I interacted with helped me deepen my understanding of what caused and perpetuated such inequality, but they also fostered an environment which developed my capacity and confidence to contribute positively to the world."

"This award means a lot because it comes from an institution I value and respect. Brescia holds a special place in my heart and to be recognized in this way is an honor," Naylor-Thimm said.

Naylor-Thimm accepted her Young Alumnae Award of Merit and delivered a speech at Homecoming to more than 120 alumnae, members of the faculty and staff, and students who received awards generously supported by alumnae.