

## Keynote Speakers

### Grande Keynote – June 11, 2024



#### **General Rick Hillier (Ret)**

Chair of the Ukrainian World Congress' Strategic Advisory Council &  
Former Chief of the Defence Staff

Topic: **50 Points of Wisdom For Today's Leaders**

General Rick Hillier is a Canadian army officer who served as the Chief of the Defence Staff, the top-ranking officer in the Canadian military, from 2005 to 2008. Throughout his career, General Hillier has had the privilege and pleasure of commanding troops from the platoon to multi-national formation level within Canada, Europe, Asia and the United States.

Hillier was recently appointed as Chair of the Strategic Advisory Council by the Ukrainian World Congress where he offers support and advocacy for the Ukraine's defence militia and is an advisor the military side where the council can be of support or assistance. As part of this role, General Hillier is championing the #UniteWithUkraine campaign, which has been helping procure non-lethal protective equipment for Ukrainians since shortly after the war began. Hillier's skills and experience in international diplomacy, defence, procurement, intelligence, logistics, communications, law and fundraising will support the civilian defenders in Ukraine's Territorial Defence Force.

In late November 2021, Premier Doug Ford announced that General Hillier would chair the province's task force coordinating the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines from their arrival through delivery to health units to distribution to Ontario residents. Hillier implemented the COVID-19 immunization program using his logistical expertise and insight to help develop a vaccine distribution plan and navigate the many challenges getting infrastructure in place to ensure the success of Ontario's vaccination program.

Born in Newfoundland and Labrador, General Rick Hillier joined the Canadian Forces as soon as he could. Having enrolled in the Canadian Forces in 1973 through the Regular Officer Training Plan program, he graduated from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1975 with a Bachelor of Science Degree. After completing his armour officer classification training, he joined his first regiment, the 8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's) in Petawawa, Ontario. Subsequently, he served with, and later commanded, the Royal Canadian Dragoons in Canada and Germany.

In 1998 General Hillier was appointed as the first Canadian Deputy Commanding General of III Corps, US Army in Fort Hood, Texas. In 2000 he took command of NATO's Stabilization Force's (SFOR) Multinational Division (Southwest) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In May 2003 General Hillier was appointed as Commander of the Army and subsequently, in October 2003, he was selected as the Commander of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan. General Hillier was promoted to his present rank and assumed duties as the Chief of the Defence Staff on 4 February 2005.

He retired from the Canadian Forces in July 2008, and was subsequently appointed as chancellor of Memorial University of Newfoundland. In 2009, Hillier co-founded Project Hero, a scholarship program for the children of Canadian Forces personnel killed while on active military duty.

## Special Keynote – June 10, 2024



### **Stéfane Marion**

Chief Economist and Strategist, National Bank of Canada  
Executive Vice-President, Financial Markets

#### **Topic: Economic update**

Stéfane Marion has been the Chief Economist and Strategist for the National Bank of Canada and National Bank Financial since November 2008.

Mr. Marion is a sought-after speaker on economic trends and their impact on financial markets and is a frequent guest on BNN Bloomberg. Brendan Wood International has named him one of Canada's top economists.

The Economics and Strategy group at National Bank Financial is consistently ranked among Canada's top forecasters and is known for the accuracy of its projections. Mr. Marion was appointed to the Monetary Policy Council and the newly formed Business Cycle Council by the C.D. Howe Institute in 2012.

Additionally, he is a member of the National Bank Retirement Committee. Mr. Marion joined National Bank Financial's economics team in 1999. Prior to that, he worked for several years at the Departments of Finance and Industry in Ottawa, where he analyzed the impact of macroeconomic policies and conducted economic forecasts as part of his responsibilities. He has worked on the development of several economic forecasting models as well as the analysis of US-Mexico free trade agreements (FTA, NAFTA).

Mr. Marion graduated from the Université de Montréal with a bachelor's and master's degree in economics.

## Opening Keynote – June 10, 2024



### **Michelle Ray**

Hall of Fame Leadership Speaker and Author

#### **Topic: Leading in Real Time**

Michelle Ray is a sought-after international leadership and change expert. An entrepreneur, an author, and an educator. A credit to her Aussie roots, Michelle engages audiences with her down-to-earth, tell-it-like-it-is style. As a respected thought leader, she has worked with some of the world's most recognizable brands, including Microsoft, the FBI, TD Bank, PayPal, and an array of Fortune 500 companies.

After a successful career in media and advertising in Australia, Michelle shifted gears and accepted a leadership role at a global non-profit youth organization. She facilitated enduring partnerships between youth, entrepreneurs, and educators, preparing future generations to thrive in tomorrow's business environment.

With more than 25 years of experience researching leadership, accountability, change, and workforce trends, Michelle has a deep understanding of new realities demanding the attention of leaders. Specifically, a dramatic shift in where and how we work, generational dynamics, talent shortages, and managing disruption while keeping the "human factor" of leadership top-of-mind.