

THE VIMY AWARD



Michelle Douglas

Michelle Douglas is a veteran, former military police officer, retired federal public servant, and lifelong advocate for 2SLGBTQI+ rights. A survivor of Canada's "LGBT Purge," she has spent over 30 years working to advance legal equality and justice for her community.

Michelle served in the Canadian Armed Forces from 1986 to 1989 as a military police officer. Despite a distinguished service record, she was honourably discharged after having been deemed "Not Advantageously Employable Due to Homosexuality." In 1992, her landmark legal challenge led to the end of Canada's formal ban on LGBT members serving in the military—a pivotal moment in Canadian human rights history.

This experience sparked a lifelong commitment to advocacy and volunteerism. Professionally, Michelle had a 30-year career in the federal public service, culminating in her role as Director of International Relations at the Department of Justice. She retired from public service in 2019.

Since then, Michelle has served as Executive Director of the LGBT Purge Fund, working to address the harm caused by decades of state-sanctioned discrimination against 2SLGBTQI+ Canadians.

In recognition of her leadership and service, Michelle was appointed Honourary Colonel of the Chief Professional Conduct and Culture organization within the Canadian Armed Forces in December 2023. She also sits on the board of directors of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation.

Her contributions have been recognized with several honours, including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012) and the King Charles III Coronation Medal (2024). McGill University's Faculty of Law also hosts an annual lecture series in her name.

Michelle is a graduate of Carleton University and was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters (honoris causa) by Mount Saint Vincent University in 2024. She resides in Burlington, Ontario.

As the 2025 Vimy Award Laureate, Michelle's courage changed the course of Canadian history, opening the doors to so many who wanted to serve Canada but could not.