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Akaash Maharaj Issues his Final Campaign Communiqué

Toronto – Monday 15 December 2003

*Akaash Maharaj
vows to carry on his work of upholding liberalism within the Liberal Party
in his final campaign letter to Party members*

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this note finds you well, and enjoying this week of high drama in Canadian politics. I wanted to send you a few lines to bring to a close my campaign for the presidency of the Liberal Party of Canada, which culminated at the recent leadership convention in Toronto.

The vote in the presidential election was excruciatingly close, with the count delaying the close of the convention by more than an hour. In the end, however, I did not prevail.

I should like to offer the other candidates, Greg Ashley and Mike Eizenga, my congratulations. Greg conducted himself with absolute honour throughout the convention, and I hope we will soon see him in the Commons. Mike ran a professional realpolitik campaign that I know will serve him well as the new president, and I offer him every assistance and endorsement in taking the Party forward.

While the election results were naturally personally disappointing, they only deepened my gratitude to my supporters across Canada. I am keenly aware that it takes courage to be an idealist in a cynical world, to stand up for what is right rather than to yield before the powerful. Accordingly, I feel a greater sense of debt than I could possibly express to all those who were willing to publicly endorse my ideas and ideals for the presidency. My campaign was nothing if not a sincere effort to justify their confidence, and it will always be part of my life's work to make every one of my supporters proud of their choice.

The two years of my campaign have granted me the enormous privilege of deepening my understanding of, and my passion for, our country. I can think of no other activity that could have taken me from Whitehorse to Charlottetown, allowed me to visit each

province at least half a dozen times, and helped me to forge friendships in Canada's largest metropoli and smallest hamlets.

I am especially proud of my national campaign team, and of our having run a campaign of integrity and idealism, appealing to the higher virtues of liberalism and the nobility of public service. Certainly, there are those who argued that this was not the right time for the politics of conscience to displace the politics of ambition. But I remain steadfast in my conviction that it is always the right time to do the right thing.

The test of political leadership is our willingness to do what is right not in spite of the difficulty, but precisely because of the difficulty, because it is only through the exercise of political courage that we prove ourselves worthy of our country's name.

I do hope to be able to remain involved in the Liberal Party, to continue upholding the vision of the future embodied by my campaign. The election results were certainly difficult, but have reaffirmed my belief that we must have the courage to grow the Liberal Party, to embrace the new Canada and live up to our democratic creed, to truly become a Party of the many and not the few. And if history has but one lesson, it is that the future catches up to us all.

Whatever happens next, I will be forever grateful for the opportunity you have given me to serve our Party and our country as National Policy Chair over the past six years, and as a presidential candidate over the last two years.

I look forward to continuing to share with you in the building a nation whose best is yet to come.

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