

Statement by Prime Minister Martens for Black Tie Dinners

Good evening. Lieve and I are very sorry that we are not able to be with you tonight at this Black Tie Gala. Up With People holds great meaning for us and, although we are not physically in attendance, you are most assuredly in our thoughts.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to add my personal greetings and congratulations to Up With People during these 25th Anniversary celebrations. Up With People has, over the years, become a household name in Belgium. Since 1968, 20 international casts have toured in our country, bringing an important message of hope and understanding between people. Your students have lived with more than 10,000 Belgian families in 66 of our towns and cities. I highly value the contribution Up With People has made and continues to make throughout the world in breaking down barriers of intolerance and misunderstanding, and in bringing the human family closer together.

Our world today is experiencing a great deal of change, which presents us with many challenges to overcome but also with many opportunities to build a strong and durable foundation of understanding and cooperation among nations. I believe Up With People has a vital role to play in the years ahead, not only with its ability to inspire thousands of people through music, but also with an extraordinary educational program that provides valuable training for today's young leaders. All of you in attendance this evening are providing important support to Up With People, and to the young men and women of Arizona who will benefit from the scholarship money that is being raised. Let me take this opportunity to wish Up With People a future of continued growth and success.

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