

MEMBER STATEMENT—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTHERN UNITED PLACE

February 28, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi. Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I am going to talk about Northern United Place. Every day, hundreds of people walk its halls -- tenants in affordable housing, students in student housing and Aurora College classrooms, the staff of Yellowknife United Church, and residents from across the city who attend workshops, film screenings, meetings, and social events in the auditorium. Northern United Place is the heart of my riding, and in November the community came together to celebrate its 40th anniversary as a Yellowknife landmark.

Mr. Speaker, Reverend Jim Ormiston of Yellowknife United Church had a vision of creating a building that would serve the religious, housing, educational, and recreational needs of the growing community. He gathered support from the federal and territorial governments, and Northern United Place was built at a cost of just over \$5 million and officially opened in November 1976.

The block of units that faces toward downtown provides 84 affordable housing apartments for people or families who earn less than \$33,000 a year. Tenants pay 30 per cent of their gross household income on rent. Seniors are priority renters, along with people with disabilities. The people at Northern United often stay for years, even decades, because they are offered safety and community. The GNWT rented the commercial space that faces 54th Street, and that is now home to Aurora College.

Mr. Speaker, on the other side of the building, the YWCA of Yellowknife occupied the floors of the tower that face the main street. For 20 years they provided transitional housing and a shelter for women fleeing violence, along with their offices. When the Y moved out, 42 housing units were allocated to Aurora College for their students. The main floor on this side includes the United and Lutheran churches, church offices, and the public gathering spaces that Yellowknifers know well. Northern United Place auditorium is the go-to, affordable gathering place for the community. If those walls could talk, the stories of community service, volunteerism, citizen engagement, and democratic opportunity our ears would hear.

Mr. Speaker, Northern United Place has been well served by its board, especially long-time chair Larry Elkin. It maintains the balancing act among tenants that keeps Northern United economically viable. The revenue from the commercial tenant makes affordable housing possible for low-income individuals and families, as well as low-cost rental rates for the public spaces.

Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the board that operates Northern United Place, and best wishes for many more years of serving the community. Yellowknife would not be the same without you. Mahsi.