Trudeau Marks Chinese New Year At Toronto Dragon Ball

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THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau helped Toronto's Chinese-Canadian community celebrate the Lunar New Year at a gala event in Toronto Saturday night.

He was the guest of honour at the Dragon Ball, where he celebrated the beginning of the Year of the Monkey.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, embraces former Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion as they attend the 27th Annual Dragon Ball Gala, in celebration of the Chinese New Year in Toronto on Saturday. (Photo: Michelle Siu/Canadian Press)

He arrived with former Mississauga, Ont. mayor Hazel McCallion on his arm, joking she was a date "almost as hot" as his wife Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau.

McCallion, 94, served as mayor for 36 years but retired in 2014.

At the event, held by the Yee Hong Community Wellness Foundation, Trudeau participated in a traditional eye-dotting ceremony during a lion dance.

Founder and Chair of Yee Hong Community Wellness Foundation Dr. Joseph Wong, left, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion, right, take part in a traditional eye-dotting ceremony before a lion dance at the 27th Annual Dragon Ball Gala in celebration of the Chinese New Year in Toronto on Saturday. (Photo: Michelle Siu/Canadian Press)

He pointed out that Canada has had diplomatic relations with China for 45 years, and the relationship is growing stronger each year. He noted that there are 1.3 million Chinese-Canadians.

Immigration minister John McCallum, Ontario Progressive Conservative leader Patrick Brown and Xue Bing, Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Toronto, also attended.

Seats started at $480, and money raised went to the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care.