

Aaliyah Khan
Grand Prize Winner Grades 9-12

ESSAY:

In a time where isolation overwhelmed the entire population, influential voices became more resonant than ever. Canadian society has been heavily remodelled over the past year, and Annamie Paul is an individual spearheading the transformation. The newly-elected leader of the Green Party of Canada, Annamie, is paving the way for women of colour in the Canadian Federal government.

Regardless of political affiliation, Annamie Paul has spent her life breaking barriers. As a Black, Jewish woman, speaking out can feel insurmountable, but this did not hinder her from pursuing her dream. Working upwards from law school, she earned a position in the Canadian Senate. Annamie was an unreserved advocate for pertinent issues such as racial equality, women's rights, and climate change. Viewing the news of Annamie being elected in October was motivating. Believing that a person-of-colour, let alone a woman, could fight in a male-dominated profession reassured me that it was possible, and I am convinced that young women across Canada absorbed the same influence I did.

From an early age, I have dreamt of pursuing a career in Aerospace Engineering. As I became older, I realized how immensely male-dominated the field is. Strong female figures breaking barriers are imperative for young women like myself to feel confident while entering what feels like uncharted territory. After being elected, Annamie stated, "It's going to be just a little easier today for young Black girls or Indigenous girls or other under-represented groups to imagine themselves in politics." This resonated with me, elucidating how critical it is for marginalized groups to have a strong symbol resemblant to themselves. Annamie Paul has been one of the loudest voices for Canadian women and people of colour this year, and we will proceed to watch what she does next.