

**Spring Convocation**  
**St. John's, May 26-29, 2015**  
**This is a consolidated text of remarks made to convocation by**  
**Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-Chancellor**

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Welcome to our 2015 spring convocation. We are so pleased that you have joined us for what is always a special time in the life of a university, a time when we celebrate the success of our students.

So, of course, a special welcome and congratulations to every one of you – our graduating students.

I know that your parents, families, friends and professors all played a supporting role in your success, and they are all here to cheer your accomplishments. But make no mistake – ultimately it was your dedication, hard work and talent that brought you here today, so congratulations.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating our graduating students.

I would like to acknowledge and welcome the member of the Board of Regents who joins us on stage, along with many other members of our board. All of our Board of Regents members volunteer their time and contribute significantly to our university. Would you please join me welcoming and acknowledging them.

I am also pleased to welcome and congratulate Dr. Noreen Golfman who in March was appointed by the Board of Regents as our new provost and vice-president (academic) and during this convocation session was installed as Memorial's pro vice-chancellor. We are confident that Memorial and our great province will continue to benefit significantly from her passion, experience and leadership in her new role.

Every degree awarded is the result of a personal journey requiring significant commitment and work, and is worthy of considerable accolades as an important milestone in each student's life.

In particular however, I would like to acknowledge our doctor of philosophy and doctor of psychology students.

The attainment of a doctoral degree is a singular accomplishment, an extraordinary commitment of time, emotional energy, financial resources and the fulfillment of a lifelong quest.

As a small symbolic gesture of recognition, a tip-of-the-hat if you will, towards soon-to-be peers and colleagues, we have seated our doctoral students here on the stage, and we extend our congratulations to each of them for their remarkable achievements.

Honorary Graduates:

We are joined on stage by a special guest whom we are all pleased will soon join the ranks of those named as honorary graduates of Memorial University.

I am speaking of Mary Gordon, an internationally recognized and respected social entrepreneur, educator, author and child advocate. A Kindergarten teacher by profession, she took the experience gained in the most culturally diverse city in Canada and created organizations that have had both provincial and international impacts on education.

For her imaginative and entrepreneurial approach to education, she will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. You will more about, and from, Ms. Gordon a little later.

I am speaking of Zita Cobb – business leader, philanthropist and social entrepreneur. Ms. Cobb understands the power of business and place, and believes business can and should serve social ends. This is reflected in the charitable Shorefast Foundation, founded by Ms. Cobb and her brothers on Fogo Island.

For her philanthropy and social entrepreneurship and for her commitment to, and belief in, place, Ms. Cobb will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. You will more about, and from, Ms. Cobb a little later.

I am speaking of Margaret-Ann Armour, scientist, visionary and leader. Joining the University of Alberta's chemistry department in 1979, she was struck by the need to encourage more women to study science. Taking action, she helped found WISEST – Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology – which provides high school students the opportunity to complete paid summer research programs at university research labs.

For her leadership and for her positive impact on gender equality in the fields of science, engineering, trades and technology, Dr. Armour will receive an honorary doctor of science degree. You will more about, and from, Dr. Armour, a little later.

I am speaking of Howard William Meeker, known to Canadians young and old as Howie Meeker – hockey player, coach, general manager, announcer, broadcaster, colour commentator, storyteller and studio analyst.

Living in Newfoundland and Labrador for approximately 20 years, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, Mr. Meeker honed the skills that ultimately would make him a national hockey icon, becoming an educator and instructional leader. Here, he became Canada's hockey coach.

For his contribution to the development of hockey and excellence in coaching in Newfoundland and Labrador, and in Canada, Mr. Meeker will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. You will hear more about, and from, Mr. Meeker, a little later.

I am speaking of Robert Mellin – architect, scholar, award-winning author, painter, musician, chronicler, preservationist and outstanding educator.

Born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, Dr. Mellin adopted Newfoundland and Labrador as his second home 40 years ago, and in 1987, he embarked on fieldwork and research in Tilting for the restoration and preservation of their houses, outbuildings and other cultural landscapes – and then shared that pride with everyone.

For his contributions, Dr. Mellin will receive an honorary doctor of letters degree and we will hear more about, and from, Dr. Mellin a little later.

I am speaking of Georgina Hedges who, throughout her lifetime, has dedicated herself to education, the arts and rural development.

She is recognized as an innovative, compassionate and dedicated teacher, administrator and community leader, and her volunteer service to Memorial has been extraordinary as a Board of Regents member, as vice chair, and twice acting as chair of the Board of Regents.

For her contributions to the arts and to Memorial, Dr. Hedges will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. You will hear more about, and from, Ms. Hedges a little later.

I am speaking of Penelope Rose, journalist, and social justice and policy advocate.

For almost four decades as CEO and executive director of the Community Services Council, now the Community Sector Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, she has combined her interests in social justice advocacy, policy development and volunteerism to effect positive social change through foresight and innovation.

For her distinguished and long service to the community, Ms. Rowe will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Just as we celebrate our graduating students, convocation is also a time for us to reflect on all of the accomplishments and successes we have experienced across the university.

Every year our students, along with our faculty and staff, amaze us with leadership and achievements above and beyond their required programs or responsibilities that distinguishes them at a national and international level.

We tell our stories of success and achievements throughout the year in our *Gazette* newspaper, our *Research Matters* magazine, our alumni magazine, *Luminus*, and on our university web site.

And, of course, also in our annual president's report, now exclusively online, compiled from *Face Forward*, a thematic online periodical, regularly sharing current events and stories representing the people and work happening at

Memorial University. The current theme is student success which is appropriate given that it is convocation season.

I encourage you to learn more about the exceptional people at Memorial University, our faculty, staff, students, retirees and alumni, and what they all do as active engaged citizens to make the world a better place to live – safer, more prosperous, more interesting.

A key part of their success is the sustained and unwavering support from our partners. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our community, municipal and private sector leaders, and other partners for their unwavering commitment and support of Memorial University.

Only by working together can we ensure investments and initiatives help us achieve our important mandates – fostering student success and the social, cultural and economic development of our province.

And of course, I would be remiss in not thanking our key partner, the provincial government. I want to acknowledge the provincial government minister who joins us on stage today. Minister, on behalf of Memorial University, I extend my sincere thanks to you and your government for your continued support of our university.

Ladies and gentlemen, Memorial is focused on meeting the needs of our students, developing innovative living and learning spaces, building and renewing appropriate infrastructure for 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching, research and public engagement, and making a difference in our communities.

And support from all of our partners ensures Memorial has the stability and the resources necessary to achieve our vision to be one of the most distinguished public universities in Canada and beyond.

Our university's unique origin, our vision, mission and core values, paint a picture of who we were, who we are, and what we aspire to become. And we want and need you, our new graduates, alumni and friends, and partners to continue to join us on that exciting and challenging journey.

So it is important that every spring and every fall, the Memorial University community gathers together for convocation, to admit the graduands to their degrees – one of the most important tasks we undertake today.

But university convocation is more than that.

Convocation is an assembly of our university community, and together with our extended community, we gather to not only celebrate our student and academic accomplishments, but also to re-affirm and express our on-going responsibilities to serve the public good, and to fulfill our special obligation to the people of this province.

And through that, the university embodies the aspirations of those who founded Memorial University College – to be a living legacy to those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom in WW1 and in subsequent conflicts – a living legacy dedicated to the advancement of our society through education.

As we mark over the next few years the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War, we remind ourselves of this legacy, and through teaching, research and public engagement, we work towards a better world.

Graduands, you have already had a role in this, and you have a role yet to come. You walked into this hall today as students who have successfully completed the requirements for your degrees.

You will leave as graduates of Memorial University, as alumni, joining a family of almost 90,000 strong. You are Memorial's greatest ambassadors. And remember, you will not be alumni from just any university. You are graduating from Memorial University.

You are the rightful heirs of the bold young people who stepped forward to preserve our freedom, and you honour their memory with your success and presence here today.

You are about to write a new chapter in your lives, and just like for your university, I see tremendous success on the horizon for each of you.

This is your time to take to heart the responsibilities and privileges that come with your degree and make your mark in Newfoundland and Labrador, and across the country and the world. Congratulations to each of you as you leave here today to begin the next adventures in your lives. I know you will do us proud. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me once again in congratulating our graduates.

#### Installation of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Session #1)

Ladies and gentlemen, as the provost and vice-president (academic), Dr. Noreen Golfman serves as a member of our Board of Regents and holds the senior leadership position on our Vice-Presidents Council, with responsibilities for ensuring that the university's operations, budget, policies and administrative structures are aligned in support of the academic mission and strategic priorities.

So Dr. Golfman has assumed significant leadership responsibilities and a very complex portfolio. With these responsibilities also comes the designation pro vice-chancellor, one of the three senior officers of convocation empowered to preside over convocation and to confer degrees.

As her biography in your convocation program indicates, she is exactly the right person for the job.

A professor of English, Dr. Golfman holds several degrees, including a PhD in English from Western University, and she began teaching at Memorial in 1984.

She served as dean of graduate studies at Memorial from 2008 to 2014, and under her leadership, the School of Graduate Studies experienced tremendous growth.

She has also brought her leadership skills to the national level, recently serving two terms as president of the Canadian Federation of Social Sciences and Humanities.

She has also just completed her terms as president of both the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies and the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools, and she is currently a member of the advisory committee to the Canadian studies program at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Active in Canadian cultural issues, Dr. Golfman is the founding director and chair of the St. John's International Women's Film Festival, vice-chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation and chair of the board of the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting.

Since 2011 she has co-chaired the board of directors of Business and the Arts NL, an organization that brokers relationships and funding between the arts and the corporate/private sectors.

Last year she was appointed on an interim basis as Memorial's provost and vice-president (academic) *pro tempore*, and I am sure you will agree with me that we are fortunate to have her continuing in this senior leadership role.

Madam chancellor, I have the honour to present to you Noreen Golfman, bachelor of arts, master of arts, doctor of philosophy, provost and vice-president (academic). I ask you to install Noreen Golfman as the pro vice-chancellor of Memorial University of Newfoundland.