

The following is a consolidated text of remarks made to convocation

Welcome to the 2019 Spring Convocation of Memorial University. 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 supporting roles in your success, and they are all here to celebrate 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.

On behalf of the entire Memorial University community, I want to acknowledge the Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honourable Judy Foote.

Your Honour, you have always been a tremendous advocate and supporter of our university. We are so pleased to have you here today. Welcome and thank you for joining us on stage for convocation.

Also on stage today is the member of the Board of Regents. All of our regents volunteer their time and contribute significantly to the governance of our university. Would you please join me welcoming and acknowledging our regents?

Honorary graduates

Today a special individual will join the ranks of those who have received the university's highest honour – the honorary doctorate degree.

I am speaking of Elaine Dobbin who has made significant contributions to improve society, with a primary focus on health and education, in particular those affected by autism. Her life has been, and continues to be, one of volunteerism and philanthropy to Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and beyond.

For her advocacy, leadership and significant contributions, Ms. Dobbin will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree this morning.

I am speaking of Frank Fagan – community leader and philanthropist.

Mr. Fagan became the 13th lieutenant governor of Newfoundland and Labrador in March 2013 following a distinguished career in business and many years of community service with such diverse groups as the Vera Perlin Society and Junior Achievement, Newfoundland and Labrador.

For his leadership and lifelong commitment to the betterment of our province and country, Mr. Fagan will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

I am speaking of Dr. Normal Campbell, a Memorial graduate and former faculty member who is now a professor medicine at the University of Calgary. Dr. Campbell is a champion for the control and prevention of hypertension in Canada and beyond.

For generating significant new knowledge as a researcher and for leadership in translating that knowledge for the benefit of health care professionals and for the direct benefit of patients, Dr. Campbell will receive an honorary doctor of science degree this morning.

I am speaking of Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellas – Kevin Blackmore, Wayne Chaulk and Raymond Johnson – musical and comedic legends who have performed together throughout the province and across Canada for more than 35 years.

During that time they have provided a respite for anybody who may have been feeling lost or homesick for a place and a way of life they have had to leave behind. For their contributions to creating and preserving Newfoundland and Labrador music and comedic culture, they will receive an honorary doctor of letters this afternoon.

Ladies and gentlemen, every degree conferred today is the result of a personal journey requiring significant commitment and work, and by itself is worthy of

considerable accolades as an important milestone in each student's life.

And yet, every year our students amaze us with leadership and achievements above and beyond their required programs or responsibilities that distinguish them at a national or international level.

Students like those involved with Paradigm Hyperloop, a team of 80+ students from Memorial, College of the North Atlantic and Northeastern University in Boston, with 70 per cent of members based here in Newfoundland and Labrador. The team was again chosen as one of only 22 world finalists out of 1,500 teams in the SpaceX Hyperloop Pod Competition.

The competition's goal is to support the development of functional prototypes and encourage innovation by challenging student teams to design and build the best high-speed pod. Our team will compete on July 21 in California, and as they came second in the world just a couple of years ago, we have great hopes for this talented team of students.

While this convocation is without a doubt a celebration of the students graduating here today, it is also a time of reflection and celebration of our wonderful university.

During this spring convocation, Memorial University itself will reach an important milestone – we will confer our 100,000th degree. Taken collectively, all the degrees that Memorial has conferred since our first university convocation in 1950 are a direct reflection of Memorial’s significant contributions to the social, cultural and economic development of our great province, country and beyond. What an accomplishment!

And, of course, just last fall we marked the opening of our newest campus on historic Signal Hill, with the Emera Innovation Exchange and its state-of-the-art meeting facilities and leading-edge technology, plus dedicated space for public engagement and a new graduate student residence.

With a focus on public engagement and innovation, the tenants, programming and partnerships based at the Signal Hill Campus will connect the expertise and ideas of

Memorial's students, faculty, staff and retirees, with the people and organizations of Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond.

And leading-edge connective technologies will help encourage participation from across and the province and beyond. Our entire history has been rooted in our connection to this place and our special obligation to the people of this province.

Signal Hill Campus reflects that history of partnership and innovation – a public university serving the public good.

Last year, we celebrated a team of researchers from our Faculty of Medicine who were the first recipients, ever from Memorial, to receive the prestigious Governor General's National Innovation Award for their groundbreaking discovery that's saving the lives of those affected by a deadly genetic disease.

This year, we are once again celebrating the Governor General's Innovation Award to a Memorial University-led team – to Dr. Trevor Bell from our Department of

Geography, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Smart ICE team... an award-winning social enterprise that integrates on-ice technology, remote sensing and Inuit knowledge to generate near real-time information of ice conditions for Arctic communities.

The award recognizes not only their technology innovation in climate change adaptation, but also their social innovation in training and employing Inuit youth in technology production and operations. They won the 2016 Arctic Inspiration Prize, the UN Momentum Award for Climate Change Solutions in 2017 and now the Governor General's National Innovation Award.

We couldn't be more proud!

We tell our stories of success and achievements throughout the year in our alumni magazine *Luminus*, on our *Gazette* news website and, of course, each year in our on-line *President's Report*.

Together they tell the stories of the incredible impact of the exceptional people of Memorial – our faculty, staff,

students, retirees and alumni – and how as active, engaged citizens, they make the world a better place to live – safer, more prosperous and definitely more interesting.

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

Ladies and gentlemen, our university's origin, our vision, mission and core values paint a picture of who we were, who we are and what we aspire to become.

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

The university embodies the aspirations of those who founded Memorial University College in 1925 – to be a

living legacy to those who paid the ultimate price for freedom in the First World War and in subsequent conflicts, a living legacy dedicated to the advancement of our society through education.

Graduands, you are part of this legacy. You walked into this hall today as students who have successfully completed the requirements for your degrees. You will leave as graduates and alumni of Memorial, you university.

You have earned the rights and privileges associated with your degree. And now this is your time to take to heart the responsibilities that also come with your degree and make your mark in Newfoundland and Labrador, and across the country and around the globe.

Best wishes to each of you as you leave here today to begin the next adventures in your lives.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me once again in congratulating our graduates. Thank you.