

Welcome to our 2018 spring convocation for Grenfell Campus, 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 each of you, our graduating students.

I know that your parents, families, friends and professors all played supporting roles in your success, but make no mistake – ultimately it was your dedication, hard work and talent that brought you here today, so congratulations on your accomplishments.

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

***(Morning session)* Our chancellor has already welcomed Her Honour Judy Foote, but I wasn't to also acknowledge our new Lieutenant Governor of**

Newfoundland and Labrador. Your Honour, welcome to your first convocation in your new role. In your previous roles you were a tremendous advocate and supporter of our university and we are so pleased to have you join us here today to help us celebrate the success of our students.

Representing the provincial government is the Honourable XXX, Minister of XXX.

Minister, on behalf of Memorial University, thank you for joining us here today to celebrate the success of our graduates.

Also joining us today is the member of the Board of Regents. All of our regents volunteer their time and contribute significantly to our university. Would you please join me in welcoming and thanking our regents?

***(Afternoon session).* This afternoon a special individual will join the ranks of those who have received the university's highest honour – the**

honorary degree. I am speaking of Birgitta Wallace, archaeologist *emerita* of Parks Canada, who has been a tireless advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador's rightful place in history.

Her research helped authenticate the Norse origins of the settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows and was the foundation of the UNESCO World Heritage site designation in 1978.

For her leadership and significant contribution to the understanding of our wonderful province's place in history, Ms. Wallace will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. You will hear more about and from Ms. Wallace a little later.

Ladies and gentlemen, as president of Memorial University for the past eight years, it has been an honour to personally connect with this campus and this community – to experience the positive impact of important and strategic initiatives and investments at Grenfell, and share each of these successes with our extended community here on the west coast.

There is so much to be proud of as we look back at more than four decades of university education here on the west coast of Newfoundland.

Grenfell's success is due in no small part to the passion and dedication of all those who work at Grenfell and I thank each and every one of them. In particular, however, I want to acknowledge and welcome Dr. Jeff Keshen to his first official convocation as vice-president, Grenfell Campus.

Dr. Keshen joined us last November and since that time he has worked tirelessly to build and strengthen community relationships, to improve opportunities and experiences for students, and to understand and meet the needs of the entire Grenfell community. He is going to speak to you in just a few moments, but would you join me in welcoming him.

The accomplishments at Grenfell in the past number of years have put the campus in an exceedingly solid position, with academic program growth – a new masters in fine arts was approved last week by the

Board of Regents – along with infrastructure improvements, enhancements to the research profile and public engagement opportunities, just to name a few developments.

And, of course, the high calibre of Grenfell’s students is a key part of its success. As then-Premier Frank Moores said at a banquet celebrating the opening of Grenfell in 1975, “Universities are judged by the students they produce, and reputations are built by the young people who pass through its door.” And what a great reputation Grenfell Campus has and what a wonderful group of students we have graduating here today.

Building on an encouraging eight per cent increase in enrolment this year at Grenfell, we know that we can expect great things in the future with the continued implementation of Grenfell’s Vision 2020, the five-year strategic plan to attract and retain a diverse and growing community of enthusiastic students, faculty

and staff who choose the unique environment of Grenfell Campus for their education and employment.

Through all of this, Grenfell's impact and reach will only continue to grow. And, of course, its future success will continue to build on the strength and integral connections that exist between this university campus, this city and this region.

So I would like to take this opportunity to thank our community and municipal leaders and other western Newfoundland partners for your unwavering support of Grenfell Campus again this year, and through that, your support for all of Memorial University.

Now more than ever, support from all of our partners is vital. Only by working together can we ensure that investments and initiatives help us achieve our important mandate – fostering student success, and the social, cultural and economic development of our great province.

Ladies and gentlemen, 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.

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 our freedom in the First World War and in subsequent conflicts.

A living legacy dedicated to the advancement of our society through education – a legacy that the Danger Tree sculpture on Grenfell Campus so rightly commemorates.

Graduands, you are part of this legacy and this aspiration. You walked into this hall today as students

who have completed the requirements for your degrees. You will leave as alumni of Memorial University, joining a family more than 90,000 strong.

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

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

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