

Fall Convocation 2018 -- St. John's

The following is a consolidation of three fall convocation sessions

Welcome to 2018 fall 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.

Joining us on stage from the provincial government is the honourable minister. Minister, on behalf of Memorial University, thank you for joining us here today to celebrate the success of Memorial University and its graduates.

Also joining us 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?

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 Dr. Geoffrey Parker who has been called “one of the greatest living theoreticians in evolutionary biology.” He has made a lifetime contribution to the foundations and

development of behavioural ecology, in particular understanding evolutionary adaptations and their consequences for natural populations.

For a lifetime of leadership and significant contributions to biology, Dr. Parker will receive an honorary doctor of science degree. You will hear more about, and from, Dr. Parker, a little later.

I am speaking of Mr. Robert Crosbie, chairman of Crosbie Group Limited.

Called a gravity-defying entrepreneur, during his almost 40-year career he has excelled in business and made exceptional philanthropic contributions to Memorial University and Newfoundland and Labrador. Since graduating from Memorial he has been a steadfast supporter of the Faculty of Business Administration, as well as student success programs.

For his outstanding leadership, public service and philanthropy throughout the province, Mr. Crosbie will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. And you will hear more about, and from, Mr. Crosbie a little later.

We are also pleased to recognize three retired professors who were recently accorded the distinguished title professor *emeritus* by Memorial University's Senate and Board of Regents: Dr. Eric Gill, Dr. George Martin and Dr. Anne Story.

Our *professores emeriti* have given their academic, scholarly and professional lives in service to Memorial University's mission. They have inspired generations of students and helped build this fine institution. On behalf of the entire Memorial University community, I offer congratulations to each of them and you will hear more about them later as well.

I am also pleased to acknowledge recent additions to our senior leadership team. Just last month Dr. Linda Rohr was appointed dean of the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation. For the past 14 years at Memorial, Dr. Rohr has been an academic staff member in the school and most recently served as associate dean (undergraduate students) for the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation.

And in April we welcomed a new dean of pharmacy, Dr. Shawn Bugden. Dr. Bugden came to Memorial from the University of Manitoba where he was an associate professor in the College of Pharmacy, Faculty of Health Sciences, and an adjunct scientist in the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy in their College of Medicine.

Next month we will welcome Dr. Gavan Watson as the new director of the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. Dr. Watson comes to us from Western University where he most recently served as associate director, eLearning, in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and as adjunct research professor in the Centre for Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Please join me in welcoming our new senior academic leaders.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge long-time Memorial professor, professor *emeritus* and public orator Shane O'Dea, who has announced that he will retire from his oration duties. Professor O'Dea began as an orator in 1982, became public orator in 1995, and since that time has delivered dozens of orations – never an easy task.

Ingredients of a good oration include humour, inspiration, narrative and brevity, all the while communicating a glowing resume of the honoree's accomplishments. Professor O'Dea never failed to deliver. He is a true a

wordsmith with a flair for oratory. He has said he enjoyed every oration he prepared, no matter how difficult some may have been.

On behalf of the entire Memorial community, I offer my sincere thanks to Professor O'Dea for his more than three decades of leadership, dedication and contributions to successful Memorial convocations. Please join me in thanking him.

Every degree conferred today is the result of a personal journey requiring significant commitment and work, and by itself is worth 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.

Our 2011 Teaching and Learning Framework highlighted our aspirations for our students. It also articulated the vision, core values and principles of our approach to teaching and learning, and described the characteristics of a vibrant teaching and learning community at Memorial.

The framework's foundational statement placed students and student learning at the centre of everything we do. It acknowledged explicitly that our social contract to educate our students is at the core of all our activities, including research and scholarship, and public engagement.

And it is through this student focus that we set our priorities and fulfill our mandate as a nationally competitive, public teaching-research university.

Having realized the key objectives of that original Teaching and Learning Framework, Memorial is looking to the future with a new Teaching and Learning Framework for 2018-2023.

Approved by Memorial's academic Senate just last week, this new guiding document continues Memorial's commitment to innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, with a new focus on a transformative student experience that integrates accessibility, engagement and student success.

The renewed framework requires Memorial's teaching and learning resources and capabilities to come together more formally and effectively through collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives.

It also integrates activities of Memorial's other two foundational frameworks in research and public engagement, which serve to fulfill the university's mission under the guidance of our institutional values.

To support the implementation of the renewed Teaching and Learning Framework and promote leadership in teaching and learning across the university, Memorial's CITL – the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning – will take on a more central role and a broader mandate and vision.

And a new multi-stakeholder advisory council will also help CITL foster critical relationships and build capacity to support teaching and learning.

This work involved broad consultation and incredible effort, and I would like to thank Dr. Noreen Golfman, provost and vice-president (academic) and her tremendous team chaired by Dr. Rob Shea, associate vice-president (academic) for the Marine Institute, who worked with her, and also Dr. Kim Myrick from CITL who helped craft the framework.

Would you please join me in acknowledging their contribution?

We tell our stories of success and achievements throughout the year in our alumni magazine *Luminus*, on our *Gazette* news site, and, of course, each year in our on-line *President's Report*. Together they tell the story of the incredible impact of the exceptional people at Memorial University, and how as active, engaged citizens, they make the world a better place to live – safer, more prosperous and definitely more interesting.

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 and the discovery of new knowledge.

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 of Memorial University, as alumni, joining a family of more than 90,000 strong.

You have earned the rights and privileges associated with your degree. And now this 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, 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.