

The following is a consolidated text of remarks made to convocation

Welcome to 2018 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.

(*Session 4*) On behalf of the entire Memorial University community, I want to acknowledge our new Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honourable

Judy Foote. Your Honour, in your previous roles you were a tremendous advocate and supporter of our university and we know that will continue. We are so pleased to have you here today. Welcome and thank you for joining us on stage for convocation.

Joining us on stage is the minister representing the provincial government. 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?

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 Dr. Margaret MacMillan – an historian of international acclaim. By

demonstrating the past has strong and relevant parallels for understanding the circumstances of today, her work ensures that the lessons of history are not forgotten.

For her leadership and her scholarships on the interconnections between our past, present and our possible futures, Dr. MacMillan will receive an honorary doctor of letters today.

Called a “national treasure” by CBC’s Peter Mansbridge, Peter Herrndorf has had an astounding influence on Canadian arts and culture since beginning his career with the CBC in 1965. From television to radio to print to the performing arts, Mr. Herrndorf has helped shape the Canadian cultural landscape through his leadership and vision. For his extraordinary contribution to the administration and development of the arts in Canada, Mr. Herrndorf will receive an honorary degree of laws degree.

Robert Chafe has distinguished himself as a writer in theatre, dance, opera, radio, fiction and film. His unique gift is his ability to connect us all through the power of storytelling and artistic creation that is firmly rooted in our

own culture and heritage, and a point of pride for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. For his leadership and major contributions to our theatre and culture, Mr. Chafe will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Throughout the past five decades, Marion Bogo has transformed social work education and practice both nationally and globally and contributed to the well-being and health of both Canada and society as a whole. Her worldwide impact and leadership – through contributions to new knowledge and innovative programs and practices – have distinctively influenced the education of social workers and social work educators. For her leadership and contribution to the development of social work education, Ms. Bogo will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Dr. Cindy Blackstock is a member of the Gitksan First Nation, and also social worker, activist, academic and champion for First Nations children. Dr. Blackstock has more than 25 years of social work experience in child protection and Indigenous children's rights. With the backing of the Assembly of First Nations, Dr. Blackstock

launched a human rights complaint against Ottawa in 2007, leading to a human rights tribunal ruling in early 2016 which ordered the federal government to launch a complete overhaul of on-reserve child welfare programs in Canada. For her fearlessness and persistence, Dr. Blackstock will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree this afternoon.

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.

Students like Michael O'Keefe, a performance and musicology undergraduate student from St. John's, who is Memorial's, and Newfoundland and Labrador's, newest Rhodes Scholar, and is graduating during Spring Convocation.

The dean of Music describes him as “a musician, scholar, humanitarian and policy-shaper.” He is intensely interested in the relationship between music and people, how it influences policy, justice and inclusivity, and its capacity to bring together people of diverse backgrounds together.

We are also very proud that Memorial had 39 Academic All-Canadians, exceptional Sea-Hawks athletes and leaders with an academic standing of 80 per cent or better. The number represents nearly 30 per cent of all Memorial’s student-athletes.

And just earlier this month, it was announced that thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the Canadian Space Agency, a team of engineering students will take part in a real space mission by designing, building, launching and operating their own satellite. This will be the very first Earth observation satellite built in this province, along with an opportunity to launch it into space from the International Space Station in 2020.

And of course, it's not just our students who have earned national and international distinction. In late December, we were pleased to congratulate Dr. Barbara Neis of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, who was awarded the Order of Canada for her innovative research on the interactions between work, environment and health in the coastal communities of Newfoundland and Labrador, and beyond.

And just earlier this month, a team of researchers from our Faculty of Medicine received the prestigious Governor General's Innovation Award for their ground-breaking discovery that's saving the lives of those affected by a deadly genetic disease.

Drs. Terry-Lynn Young, Kathy Hodgkinson, Sean Connors and Daryl Pullman are the first recipients from Memorial to receive this prestigious award.

In acknowledging their significant achievements, I want to thank all of our partners and community members for their tremendous support of the Faculty of Medicine's *Building a Healthy Tomorrow* campaign – a campaign with a focus

on improving the lives of the people and communities we serve.

In December, we celebrated raising more than \$5 million for student support, simulation, and education technology and research. Your support and the support of our community, really does make a difference.

And educators and researchers across all our faculties are making huge contributions to the health and well-being of the people of our great province.

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 fall 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.

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 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.