

**Grenfell Campus Fall Convocation
Speaking Notes for Dr. Gary Kachanoski
President and Vice-chancellor
Friday, October 4, 10:00 a.m.**

Degrees Conferred:

B.A. (Hons.), B.A., B.Sc., B.N., B.F.A.(Theatre and Visual), B. Ed., (Prim./Elem., and Inter./Secondary), B.B.A., B.R.M., M.Ed., M.P.E., M.N.

Good morning, everyone. Welcome to our 2013 fall convocation for Grenfell Campus, Memorial University. We are so pleased that you have joined us this morning 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 our graduating students.

I know that your parents, families, friends and professors all played a supporting role 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.

Graduands, 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 80,000 strong.

And just as importantly, you will also be counted among the thousands of alumni of Grenfell Campus. One of the wonderful things I've learned since becoming president of Memorial, is that the strength of spirit of Grenfell's students and alumni – their affinity for this place – is simply immeasurable.

And I am confident you carry that same sense of connection and we want you to stay connected.

We have a special guest on stage with us this morning, one whom we are all pleased will soon join the ranks of distinguished individuals named as honorary graduates of Memorial University.

I am speaking of Mr. Henry Vokey, master boat-builder. For more than 55 years, Mr. Vokey has used traditional boat-building methods to craft punts and rodneys, trap boats and speed boats, schooners and dories – more than 1,000 boats of all types.

It is believed no one on the island of Newfoundland has built more boats than Mr. Vokey. Clearly he proved his father wrong, who advised the young Henry that he would starve to death building wooden boats. And of course we are so pleased that he followed his passion.

This morning Mr. Vokey will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree in recognition of his significant contributions to traditional boat-building, and the preservation of cult and Labrador.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome Sheila Ashton who joins us on stage this morning. Ms. Ashton is a dedicated member of our Board of Regents and is representing our board chair, Iris Petten, who unfortunately could not join us for convocation today.

Ladies and gentlemen, as president and vice chancellor of Memorial University, I am proud of the work and accomplishments being done at Grenfell Campus by our students, faculty and staff. There is so much to celebrate as we approach 2015 and start to plan the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Grenfell Campus.

And if you've been on campus lately, I know you must be amazed and proud, as I am, at how Grenfell Campus is changing.

It bears little resemblance to its first year of operation in 1975 when a mere 400 students attended only first and second year classes, in the one building, on a campus that was sparsely landscaped and devoid of trees and shrubs.

How far it's come!

Dedicated recruitment staff, combined with new scholarships and an increased presence nationally and internationally, are helping to get the good news out about Grenfell Campus. This fall, despite challenging demographics in the K-12 system, we enjoyed over a strong increase in enrolment and now welcome students from 23 nations to Corner Brook and our Grenfell Campus.

And, of course, it's not just about more undergraduate students. Starting last fall, Grenfell welcomed more senior students when the graduate program in environmental policy studies began.

And with new residences just opened and the new academic building, and environmental research labs, we can and will see more students on this campus.

This influx of new students has been warmly welcomed by Corner Brook and the other communities we serve here in western Newfoundland. So I would like to take this opportunity to thank our community and municipal leaders, and other west coast partners for their unwavering commitment

and support of Grenfell Campus, and through support for that all of Memorial University.

And this is so important because, simply put, Newfoundland and Labrador needs Grenfell Campus to be successful, not just to support the growth and development of the west coast of the island, but the entire province.

And to guide our path to success we have a new vision for Memorial, a vision designed to underpin and inspire all of our activities on all our campuses.

Together with our new frameworks in teaching and learning, research and public engagement, these reflect a true desire to distinguish Memorial as a top public university in Canada and beyond, and to ensure that we build on and pursue global excellence in our areas of strength.

At the same time, they demonstrate the deep understanding of the university's importance to the province and Memorial's responsibility to fulfill its special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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 we need you, our new graduates, alumni and friends, to continue to join us on that exciting and challenging journey.

I truly believe that even greater things are in store for Grenfell. And that now is the time to up the stakes, embrace the transformation, and work together to develop and achieve our goals and aspirations.

And so importantly, we have solid and sustained support from the pthe Honourable Tom Hedderson, Minister of Environment and Conservation, who joins us on stage today.

Minister, once again I thank you and your government for your continued support and championing of our university. It really is appreciated.

And to our new graduates, about to write a new chapter in your lives – just like your alma mater, I see tremendous success on the horizon for each of you.

As President Mose Morgan told the students at the special convocation to mark the opening of this campus in 1975, and I quote, “I stress the heavy responsibility that is yours. The reputation of the college will depend in no small measure upon how you behave and what you will achieve. Don’t lose your opportunity.”

Graduands, this is your time, 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.

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