

**Spring Convocation**  
**St. John's, May 31 – June 3, 2016,**  
**The following is a consolidated text of remarks made to convocation by**  
**Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-Chancellor**

Welcome to our 2016 spring convocation on our St. John's 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 every one of you – our graduating students.

I know that your parents, families, friends and professors all played a supporting role in your success, and they are all here to cheer 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.

I would like to acknowledge and welcome the member of the Board of Regents who joins us on stage. All of our regents volunteer their time and contribute significantly to our university. Would you please join me welcoming and acknowledging our regents.

Honorary Graduates

Today a special individual will join the ranks of those named as honorary graduates of Memorial University. I am speaking of Lieutenant General William Carr. As a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, he served in the European campaign in the Second World War. After the war, he served 33 years in the

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Canadian Forces both at home and abroad and is now regarded as the father of the modern Canadian Air Forces.

For his achievements in both military and civil aviation, along with his proven leadership and organizational abilities and their outstanding benefits to Canada, William Carr will be awarded *in absentia* an honorary doctor of laws degree.

I am speaking of Dr. Christopher Barnes, one of Canada's finest academic leaders and a visionary in the field of geoscience today. For his leadership in, and major contributions to, the field of earth and geo-sciences, for his scholarly achievements and for his contributions to the development of Memorial, he will receive an honorary doctor of science.

I am speaking of Joanne Marie MacDonald, a determined and accomplished athlete who has worked tirelessly to develop wheelchair sports and has had significant impact on the recognition and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

For her national and international achievements as an athlete and for her leadership and achievements as an advocate for persons with disabilities, Ms. MacDonald will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

We will hear more about, and from, these individuals a little later in this convocation session.

Every degree conferred this morning 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.

PhD session

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In particular, however, I would like to acknowledge our PhD and doctor of psychology students graduating here today. The attainment of these degrees is a singular achievement, an extraordinary commitment of time, emotional energy and financial resources towards the fulfillment of a lifelong quest.

We have invited our doctor of philosophy and doctor of psychology graduands to join the faculty on stage as a small gesture of our regard for their remarkable achievement, and I ask that you please join me in extending our congratulations to each of them.

*Dr. Kachanoski acknowledged three deans at various sessions of convocation.*

I am pleased to acknowledge and welcome Dr. Aimée Surprenant as Memorial's new dean of graduate studies.

Dr. Surprenant is a professor in the Department of Psychology here the Faculty of Science and has held increasingly senior academic positions at Memorial since 2006.

She is an accomplished educator, researcher and author, acclaimed among her peers and students for commitment to student success and teaching excellence.

She is a fitting addition to Memorial's academic leadership team and we are confident that the School of Graduate Studies will continue to thrive under her leadership.

Dr. Maureen Volk is dean pro-tempore of our School of Music. This is her last convocation as dean pro-tempore and we want to thank her for her leadership and dedication to our School of Music and to Memorial University.

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And finally, I am pleased to acknowledge Dr. Kirk Anderson, dean of our Faculty of Education. Since his appointment in 2011, Dr. Anderson has focused on the development of new guiding frameworks for the Faculty of Education, including a new strategic plan for 2015-202, Strength Through Collaboration. And just this past month, he was renewed for a second term as dean.

Dr. Anderson was also recently elected president of the Association of Canadian Deans of Education, only the second dean from Memorial's Faculty of Education to hold the national position.

Every year our students, along with our faculty and staff, amaze us with leadership and achievements above and beyond their required programs or responsibilities that distinguishes them at a national and international level.

Just earlier this month our Enactus Memorial student team won their ninth national championship, making them the most successful Enactus team in the world. Since 2001 Enactus Memorial has been recognized nationally and internationally for incredible contributions to their communities.

This year Enactus undergraduate students from the faculties of humanities and social sciences, business, science and engineering are together running 13 different community projects that address a range of economic, social and environmental issues.

We couldn't be more proud of their accomplishments, and we look forward to watching them compete once again, as Team Canada, at the World Cup international competition in Toronto this September.

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*Dr. Kachanoski gave examples of student success from the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, and the Schools of Nursing and Music at their convocation sessions.*

## Engineering

Who could forget the excitement when fourth-year electrical engineering student Katy Warren beat out seven other finalists on the finale of CBC Television's *Canada's Smartest Person* to claim the show's coveted title?

We are also proud of a group of engineering students who are making their mark at the international level as part of OpenLoop, an alliance of students from six universities including Memorial, Cornell, Northeastern, Harvey Mudd, Michigan and Princeton. The team is combining their talents and resources in a competition to design, build and test a scaled-down hyperloop pod, a high-speed ground transport vehicle.

## Nursing

We are proud to acknowledge two nursing students who received individual national recognition this past year.

First – Andrea Crowe, a nursing student graduating today. Ms. Crowe was chosen as the winner of The Justice Emmet Memorial Foundation's national student competition for a paper that she wrote on physician-assisted suicide and the nursing profession. The foundation runs the annual competition to foster health economics and health policy research among undergraduate and graduate students.

And secondly, balancing athletics, academics and extensive community involvement, Jessie Noseworthy, a third year nursing student, won the Atlantic

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University Sport Student Athlete Community Service Award, and then became only the second Memorial Sea-Hawk to win the national Canadian Inter-University Sport Student Athlete Community Service Award. She is an exemplary student athlete who was also named first-team Atlantic University all-star for women's soccer.

The success and accomplishments of our nursing students are a reflection of the quality and national excellence of our nursing programs. This past year, for the third consecutive time, Memorial University's bachelor of nursing (collaborative) program achieved the gold standard in nursing education, a full, unconditional seven-year accreditation from the Canadian Association of School of Nursing.

This is an exceptional accomplishment and such a great way to start to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our School of Nursing. From modest beginnings in 1966 with 38 students and three faculty members, our School of Nursing now has over 400 students in undergraduate, master's and PhD programs. So congratulations to our School of Nursing.

### Education and Music

This past year we were proud to celebrate national recognition of a trio of past and current students from our Faculty of Education and School of Music when The Swinging Belles, the popular swing band for children, took home a Juno award for Children's Album of the Year.

The belles of the Swinging Belles are Memorial alumnae Erin Power and Laura Winter, both primary school teachers and significant contributors to music education locally. The guitarist in the group is well-known local musician Duane Anders, who is also a music graduate student in instrumental conducting in our School of Music.

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And this past year, we were so pleased to announce the start of another significant collaboration between Memorial University and the Nunatsiavut Government. The project, *Tradition and Transition Among the Labrador Inuit*, is led by Dr. Tom Gordon, professor *emeritus* in our School of Music.

The five-year, \$7.4 million research initiative, with significant funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, will merge collaborative academic research with traditional knowledge to help protect, preserve and revitalize the Labrador Inuit culture and language.

This significant research initiative builds on Memorial's strong partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government, and the long-standing cooperation between the people, institutions and leaders of Nunatsiavut and Memorial researchers, scholars and students, including the on-going collaboration between the Nunatsiavut Government, our Faculty of Education, the Labrador Institute and College of the North Atlantic for the delivery in Labrador of a bachelor of education (primary/elementary) degree program for Nunatsiavut

We tell our stories of success and achievements throughout the year in our *Research Matters* magazine, our alumni magazine, *Luminus*, our *Gazette* news site, and, of course, each fall in our on-line annual *President's Report*. The current theme of the *Gazette* is student success, which is particularly appropriate during this convocation season.

And I encourage you to learn more about the exceptional people at Memorial University, 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.

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A key part of their success is the sustained and unwavering support from our partners.

So I would like to take this opportunity to thank our community, municipal and private sector leaders, and other partners, for your unwavering commitment and support of Memorial University.

And of course, I would be remiss in not thanking our key partner, the provincial government. I want to acknowledge the honourable minister who joins us on stage today. Minister, on behalf of Memorial University, I extend my sincere thanks to you and your governments for your continued support of Memorial.

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 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching, research and public engagement, and making a difference in our communities by contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of our great province.

And in these uncertain fiscal times, and perhaps unsettling times, support from all of our partners is more important than ever, support that ensures Memorial has the stability and the resources necessary for delivering on our mandate.

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

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So it is important that every spring and every fall, the Memorial University community gathers together for convocation, to admit the graduands to their degrees – one of the most important tasks we undertake today.

But university convocation is more than that.

Convocation is an assembly of our university community, and together with our extended community, we gather to not only celebrate our student and academic success, but also to re-affirm and express our on-going responsibilities to serve the public good, and to fulfill our special obligation to the people of this great province.

The university embodies the aspirations of those who founded Memorial University College – 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.

This year, we continue to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War period, and in particular this July, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conflict at Beaumont Hamel. In June, among many other events, a Danger Tree sculpture and new memorial site on our Grenfell Campus will be officially unveiled by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal.

The new memorial site is certainly a powerful symbol of our university's unique origin. But it is also a reminder that in past dark times of adversity and unsettling events, it was important to have a vision and a focus on the future, a reminder that through teaching, research and public engagement, our university, the Memorial University, works towards a better future.

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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 almost 90,000 strong. You are the rightful heirs of the bold young people who stepped forward to preserve our freedom. And you honour their memory with your success and presence here today.

This is 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. Now, more than ever, we need your ingenuity, your know-how and your leadership to advance this province and our country.

Congratulations to each of you as you leave here today to begin the next adventures in your lives. I know you will do us proud.

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

*At select sessions, Dr. Kachanoski calls on Memorial's vice-president's to make their remarks to convocation. Dr. Kachanoski also invited Dr. James Rourke, dean of the Faculty of Medicine, to address convocation.*

We recently introduced a new tradition of inviting outgoing deans to address convocation, so now I have the pleasure of introducing Dr. James Rourke, dean of our Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Rourke has served as dean for 12 years and under his leadership many great things have been accomplished:

- a new medical building with the Medical Education Centre and the Craig L. Dobbin Research Centre;
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- significant increases in enrolment in the doctor of medicine, post-graduate residency programs and medical graduate student programs; and,
- successful accreditation, multiple times, for both the MD and post-graduate programs.

Dr. Rourke has a long-standing interest in rural medicine and medical education, and is a recognized leader at provincial, national and international levels, including receiving an honorary degree from the Western University and a fellowship in the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

Please join me in acknowledging and welcoming Dr. Rourke to the podium for his remarks to convocation.