

Corner Brook Convocation
Speaking Notes for Dr. Gary Kachanoski
President and Vice-chancellor
Friday, May 8, 2015

Welcome to our 2015 fall 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 every one of you, 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.

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

I would like to acknowledge and welcome the member of the Board of Regents who joins us on stage. She 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.

I am also pleased to welcome Dr. Noreen Golfman who in March was appointed by the Board of Regents as our new provost and vice-president (academic). As our past dean of graduate studies, she is no stranger to Grenfell Campus, and all of Memorial will certainly benefit from her passion, experience and leadership in her new role.

Honorary Graduands:

We also have a special guest on stage with us, 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 Ms. Sarah Anala who is being recognized for her contributions to Inuit life and culture, and social justice.

Her career and education span more than 40 years, beginning with graduation with honours from the Grace General Hospital School of Nursing in St. John's in 1968, the first Inuk to do so.

Since then, using her own tools which she developed using the Inuit culture, traditions, language and ethos, she has devoted her life to working with Aboriginal men and women who are involved in the justice system.

As an Inuk elder and liaison, working for Correctional Service Canada, Ms. Anala develops and pilots Inuit-specific programs and services and trains other Inuit to deliver those programs to Inuit offenders in the Atlantic region, Ontario and Quebec.

She was instrumental in introducing circles of support and accountability to Labrador, and her work in promoting Inuit culture and Inuktitut, the Nunatsiavut dialect in particular, has been key for many years in the spread of social justice awareness in areas where it is most often at risk.

To quote Ms. Anala, "Sorrow shared is sorrow halved; joy shared is joy doubled."

She will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree for her contributions, particularly to the lives of those at risk. We will hear more about, and from, Ms. Anala a little later.

I am speaking of Barbara Doran, who is being recognized for her contributions and leadership in the arts community in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada.

Mrs. Doran has forged a stellar career writing, producing and directing over 30 documentary and dramatic films in many different countries. The breadth and scope of her work in film is unparalleled in the province – a place which provides inspirations for her endeavours.

Her pioneering involvement in this industry occurred when film was an unknown and unexplored art form in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is no longer the case and that is in no small measure to her passion, intelligence and commitment, and her role as a mentor, fostering talent in many young and emerging artists.

Starting with *Finding Mary March* in 1987, through to *The Grand Seduction*, an award winning international box-office hit starring Brendan Gleeson and Taylor Kitsch, her films have had a remarkable impact.

For her leadership and long commitment to and achievement in film, she will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree. You will more about, and from, Ms. Doran a little later.

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

There is so much to celebrate as we approach, this coming September, the 40th anniversary of Grenfell Campus – the new arts and science building, the wonderful new residence, the boreal ecosystem research facility, new academic programs and partnerships, and much more.

A good example of this success is the start of graduate program development. Enrolment in the Master of Arts in environmental policy has increased significantly in its first three years, with 35 established internships, a 100 per cent success in employment after graduation, and applications continuing to increase. And with this kind of success, plans are moving forward for expanding graduate programming here in the months ahead.

And this success is so important because, as I have often said, Newfoundland and Labrador needs Grenfell Campus to be successful, not just to support advanced education and the growth and development of the west coast of the island, but for the entire province.

This success and trajectory are due in no small part to the great work being done by the vice-president for Grenfell Campus, Dr. Mary Bluechardt, and her dedicated senior leadership team.

We couldn't hope to find a more passionate and committed team for Grenfell Campus and great things have happened under Dr. Bluechardt's leadership in the four years she's been here.

And with a renewed emphasis on public engagement and an advancing research, scholarship, and creative activity portfolio, Grenfell's impact and reach will only continue to grow, building on the strength and integral

connections that exist between this campus, this city, and extended west coast communities

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

Only by working together can we ensure investments and initiatives help us achieve our important mandate – fostering student success, and the social, cultural, and economic development of our great province.

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

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

So it is important that every spring and every fall, the Grenfell campus, Memorial University community, gathers together here in Corner Brook 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 accomplishments, but also to re-affirm and express our on-going responsibilities to serve the public good.

Memorial University has a special obligation to the people of the province. The university embodies an aspiration of those who founded Memorial University College – to be a living legacy to those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom in WW1 and in subsequent conflicts, and through that, the advancement of our society through education.

This year, as we mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War, we remind ourselves of this legacy, and through teaching, research and public engagement, we work towards a better world. And as students of Grenfell, you are now part of this legacy and aspiration.

You walked into this hall today as students who have completed the requirements for your degrees. You will leave as graduates of Memorial University, as alumni, joining a family almost 90,000 strong.

You have earned the rights and privileges associated with your degree. And in today's global, increasingly connected, competitive, and complicated world, the value, benefits and importance of your learning, your experiences and know-how have never been greater – never greater for you personally, but also for your community, country and the world.

This is your time, time to take to heart the responsibilities and privilege that come with your degree and make your mark in Newfoundland and Labrador, across the country and the world.

Best wishes to each of you as you leave here today to begin the next adventure in your lives, and, as our university motto encourages, to launch forth into the deep. Thank you.
