

**Grenfell Campus Fall Convocation
Speaking Notes for Dr. Gary Kachanoski
President and Vice-chancellor
Friday, May 11
10:00 a.m.**

Degrees Conferred:

B.A.(Hons.), B.A., B.Sc.(Hons.), B.Sc., B.N., B.F.A.(Theatre and Visual), B.B.A., B.R.M., M.Ed.,

Good morning everyone. Welcome to spring convocation 2012. 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 special welcome and congratulations to our graduating students.

While your parents, families, friends and professors played a supporting role in your success, ultimately it was your efforts, dedication and talent that got you to today's convocation, so congratulations on your accomplishments.

You walked into this hall today as students who had successfully completed the requirements for your degrees. You will leave as graduates of Memorial University, as alumni, joining a family of over 75,000 strong.

And in particular, 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 students and alumni, their affinity for this place, is simply immeasurable.

We hope to celebrate that campus spirit, and all of Memorial's successes and accomplishments this coming summer at Reunion 2012, our first ever, all campuses, all-year reunion.

From Aug. 8-12, all our campuses will be abuzz with faculty and school reunions, adventure tours, live performances, activities for the whole family, and a speaker series featuring prominent professors and alumni.

Of course, I invite all of our alumni and friends – especially our newest soon-to-be alumni – our graduands here today, to join us for the festivities.

We have a special guest 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 Everard Davidge, though many of you probably know him as Bud. Bud Davidge is a school teacher by profession and a musician by vocation and passion.

How many of us have not heard Bud's signature piece, *The Mummer's Song*, at Christmas, or any of the other iconic songs that he and his late partner, Sim Savory, wrote and recorded under their band's name, Simani?

This morning he will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree in recognition of his significant contributions to Newfoundland music, culture and entertainment. We are honoured that he is here today, and you will hear more about him and from him a little later.

Also joining us on stage today is Mr. Bob Simmonds, chair of the Board of Regents of Memorial University. Bob has served as chair since 2008, and I am pleased to report that in November he accepted another three-year appointment from the provincial cabinet.

Serving on our Board of Regents is an entirely volunteer position. Mr. Simmonds has given so freely of his valuable time that the university and its extended community, and the province, are indeed in his debt. I want to personally thank Bob and all members of the board for all that they do.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome and congratulations to Dr. Antony Card and Dr. David Peddle who recently joined the senior leadership team here at Grenfell Campus as associate vice-presidents.

Dr. Antony Card is currently Memorial's dean of the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation. He will soon be leaving the St. John's campus to take on new responsibilities here as associate vice-president Grenfell for research.

And along with his partner Michelle, and their 2 young twin boys Alexander and Benjamin, they are excited about joining the Grenfell campus and Corner Brook community.

Dr. David Peddle is, or course, no stranger to the Grenfell campus or to this region. David was born in Corner Brook and has been affiliated

with Memorial for over 29 years, most recently as head of the division of Arts at Grenfell. And in February, we were pleased to announce his appointment as associate vice president Grenfell (academic).

I have every confidence that both Dr. Peddle's and Dr. Card's extensive knowledge and experiences will serve to complement and enhance the many great things happening at Grenfell.

This convocation marks a special occasion in the history of Grenfell Campus and Memorial University. Twenty years ago we gathered here in Corner Brook to celebrate the first graduating class from Grenfell's Fine Arts program. They were also the first students who had completed their university programs, start-to-finish, here at Grenfell.

That day in May 1992 was a pivotal point in the growth and evolution of university education in this region, and in our great province – significant growth, evolution, and accomplishment that continues to this day.

Dr. Mary Bluechardt , VP (Grenfell) will have more on Grenfell's accomplishments and progress in her report to convocation, and there is certainly much to celebrate.

As president of Memorial, I am proud of the work and accomplishments being done at Grenfell by our students, faculty and staff, particularly the strong community and regional partnerships that have been, and continue to be, developed.

When I walk around the campus, I see pride in people's faces, secure in the knowledge that they are working and studying at an institution in its ascendancy. I am confident that in the years to come, these feelings of hope, expectation and accomplishment will continue to grow.

Grenfell Campus has everything it needs to continue on its upward trajectory. We have a strong, committed leadership team with the vision and determination to move the campus solidly into the future.

The communities we serve are there to help, and guided by our new public engagement framework we will create true partnerships and trust, with the exchange of knowledge and resources for mutual benefit.

Memorial was built on the premise that it should be a driving force behind the economic, social, cultural and scientific development of

the province. We are committed to meeting our obligation to help make life better for all people living in this province.

That includes aboriginal communities and the people of Labrador, and Grenfell has a natural, compelling and important role to play in fulfilling those obligations.

We have strong provincial government support and increased funding for Grenfell campus and the university – tremendous support as once again demonstrated in this year’s provincial budget.

And of course, Grenfell Campus has the support of the rest of Memorial University.

So, I truly believe that great things are in store for Grenfell. And that now is the time to up the stakes, and to work together to develop and achieve firm goals and new aspirations.

Recruitment and continued increases in the number of students are, of course top priorities for Grenfell. And with significant new funding from the provincial government we have made strategic investments to see enrolment grow.

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.

A full-time international recruitment officer was hired two years ago and new international markets such as the Caribbean, Bermuda and the UK are being targeted.

The development and launch of a new and exciting brand strategy this fall will allow the campus to showcase its uniqueness, while leveraging deep connections as part of the Memorial University family.

Already we are seeing results of strengthened recruitment activities. This winter, Grenfell's enrolment grew to more than 1,260 students – a 5.3 per cent increase over this time last year, and international applications for 2012 almost doubled over the previous year.

And with new residences on the way and the new academic building, we can and will see more undergraduate students on this campus.

But, of course, it's not just about more undergraduate students. Starting this fall, Grenfell campus ranks will be joined by new

graduate students when the first and only graduate program in environmental policy studies in Canada begins at Grenfell this September. And developing and supporting graduate programs in other areas is also being planned.

And that's more than just a subtle change. It marks as important a milestone in the history of Grenfell, just as that first graduating class did in 1992. It's a transformative step in the evolution of Grenfell Campus.

There are many definitions of a research intensive university, but all of them include the presence of a significant number of graduate programs across a range of disciplines.

Graduate students are accomplished academically and take on mentoring roles, and often act as teaching assistants. They are older students, perhaps with their own young families. So their engagement with the campus and their community is significantly different than undergraduate students.

With challenging provincial demographics including declining K-12 enrolment and significantly fewer Grade 12 graduates, and with the province and the country facing a shortage of a talented and skilled

workforce, the recruitment and retention of highly qualified people- undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty, must be a priority for the province.

Simply put, Newfoundland and Labrador needs Grenfell campus to be successful.

So, the sky is really the limit for Grenfell and I am sure that we all look forward to being a part of the on-going transformation in the years to come.

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

I know that you will 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.

I'll leave you with the words of Newfoundland artist David Blackwood, who received the first honorary graduate degree conferred at a Grenfell convocation: And I quote " To produce anything of lasting value requires a strong belief and love for what you do, and great patience".

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

Thank you