

## **Spring Convocation**

**St. John's, May 28 – 31, 2013**

**This is the consolidated text of the Reports to Convocations delivered in  
St. John's by Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-chancellor**

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Welcome to our 2013 spring convocation. Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate the success of our students and mark this important milestone in their lives. So, of course, a special welcome and congratulations to our graduating class.

Graduands, convocation is a time for your personal reflection and celebration, a time to recognize your talents, years of study and hard work. We hope when you look back at this time in your lives you will see it as a time of transformation, a time when you discovered your own special gifts, your own ingenuity and your own passion for learning.

The entire university community, your family and friends share in your joy and your sense of accomplishment, so congratulations!

I am pleased to acknowledge and welcome a number of distinguished individuals who are with us to help celebrate the accomplishments of our students.

First, the entire university community is so pleased and honoured to be celebrating the installation of Memorial's new chancellor, Dr. Susan Dyer Knight.

Dr. Knight has been involved with Memorial in many capacities over the years and is very familiar with the university. And with her national and

international reputation, and passion for Memorial University, she is a wonderful choice as our new chancellor.

As we celebrate the installation of our seventh chancellor, we also acknowledge and thank General Rick Hiller, who finished his appointment as the sixth chancellor of Memorial.

In addition to the wise counsel that General Hillier provided to the university as chancellor he brought his considerable talents, commitment and passion for leadership to support our university, and served as a role model to thousands of our graduates, their families and our alumni.

This past year also brought another change in the governance leadership of Memorial University. Last November, Mr. Bob Simmonds stepped down as chair of the Board of Regents of Memorial University. Bob served with distinction as chair since 2008 and we benefitted greatly from the considerable leadership, common sense and unfailing good humour he brought to our community.

Earlier this year, the government announced the appointment of Ms. Iris Petten as our new chair of our Board of Regents. Ms. Petten, a proud Memorial alumna, is a distinguished business and community leader.

She has been a strong supporter of our university and of our efforts to enrich the lives and experiences of our students, and has considerable on-going connections, particularly through our Marine Institute campus.

We also welcome Dr. Richard Marceau as our next vice-president (research) beginning in June.

Dr. Marceau comes to us from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology where he most recently served as provost and vice-president (academic), and where he directed that institute's explosive growth since 2005.

Prior to that he served as dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Sherbrooke, Quebec, and is currently president of the Canadian Academy of Engineering.

Dr. Marceau takes over the VP(R) reins from Dr. Chris Loomis who has led the research portfolio at Memorial for many years, spearheading the significant growth of our research activities.

Between that and the valuable leadership Dr. Loomis provided when he served *pro tempore* as president and vice-president (academic), and earlier as dean of pharmacy, as a teacher and researcher of considerable note, he has given his all to Memorial.

Chris, I want to thank you personally for your contributions as part of the senior leadership team and on behalf of the entire university community, wish you all the best in your on-going activities at Memorial.

#### Honorary Degree Recipients:

Mr. Robert Edwin Simmonds: In recognition of his professional community contributions, and unsurpassed dedication and contributions to the university, he will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

General Rick Hillier: In recognition of his unsurpassed dedication and contributions to the university, and his professional leadership contributions to Canada, he will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Mr. Joseph Rotman: Mr. Rotman is a distinguished businessman, philanthropist and community leader. He has been recognized with many awards for his accomplishments, service, and philanthropic endeavours and will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Ms. Susan Harvey Patten: Ms. Patten is a distinguished businessperson, philanthropist and community leader. She has been recognized with many awards for her philanthropic endeavours and will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Ms. Margot Reid: Ms. Reid is a distinguished community leader and volunteer, particularly in all aspects of the fight against cancer.

She has been recognized with national awards for her accomplishments and volunteer leadership and will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Ms. Barbara Barrett: Ms. Barrett is a distinguished community leader, director, adjudicator, and drama teacher. She has been recognized with national awards for her accomplishments and volunteer leadership and will receive an honorary doctor of laws degree.

Just as we celebrate our graduating students, and reflect on their successes, we also take this time to reflect on the accomplishments of our university. And there is a lot to celebrate.

Despite challenging provincial demographics, with declining K to 12 enrolments, Memorial continues to experience strong demand for our academic programs.

Enrolment in our undergraduate programs has increased in recent years, and with academic program expansion we can expect that trend to continue.

Graduate enrolment is up again by over eight per cent this year to just over 3,400 graduate students, and a similar increase is expected this coming year.

All of this enrolment growth is great news for the province whose success and sustainable future depends on attracting talented people with creative ideas and a passion for innovation and discovery, people who will want to move here, stay and work here, and raise their families here.

And let me tell you, every year our students, our faculty and our staff amaze us with leadership and achievements that make a difference in their local communities, and distinguish them at a national and international level.

Many exciting initiatives and accomplishments are summarized throughout the year in our *Gazette* newspaper, in our *Research Matters* magazine, and in the president's report for 2012 titled *Dare or Truth*, and of course on our web site.

I encourage you all to read and learn more about the exceptional people, places and programs of Memorial University.

Of course a key part of that success is because of the extraordinary support of the provincial government for university education. I want to acknowledge the provincial minister who is here representing government.

Minister, once again I extend my sincere thanks to you and your government for the continued tremendous support for Memorial.

It is support that ensures Memorial has the stability and the resources necessary to deliver on our mandate and achieve our vision to be one of the most distinguished public universities in Canada and beyond, support that ensures Memorial will continue to fulfill our special obligations to the people of this great province, including those who live in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

And of course we cannot do all of this by ourselves.

Throughout Memorial's history, the partnership between the university, governments, and all of our extended public and private sector communities has been a key component of the university's success and aspirations.

Tangible evidence of this is the success of our recent fundraising campaign, *Dare To*. Our goal was to raise \$50 million. At last count more than \$63 million had been raised, and that was some months ago, so our final number will be higher still. And the impact is significant.

In our School of Music, The Bruneau Centre for Excellence in Choral Music is being created through a generous donation of \$1 million from Drs. Jean and Angus Bruneau. The centre will foster choral research and professional development through internships, participation in national and international festivals, and through collaborations with the world's finest choral artists.

And in the Faculty of Education, an important initiative to improve STEM or Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Education in the province has been initiated.

This work will have a significant impact on future generations of students and is supported by a \$5 million contribution from the Hibernia Management Development Corporation.

So I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our donors and supporters, our community and municipal leaders, and other partners for their unwavering commitment and support of Memorial University, and through that support for the success of our faculty, staff, and students.

With sustained and appropriate investments, guided by our three thoughtful strategic planning frameworks, Teaching and Learning, Research, and Public Engagement, and continued support from our partners and the people of this great province, we are positioning Memorial University, and Newfoundland and Labrador, for great things to come.

Graduands, you have already had a role in this – and you have a role yet to come to help build that future. You walked into this hall today as students who had successfully completed the requirements for your degrees. You will leave as alumni, joining a distinguished family of over 78,000 strong.

And remember, you will not be alumni from just any university. You are graduating from Memorial University – a university established in 1925 as a living memorial to the fallen in the Great War and in all subsequent conflicts, so that, to use the words taken from our memorial wall “...in freedom of learning their cause and sacrifice would not be forgotten.”

As Lord Rothermere noted when he was installed as Memorial's first chancellor in 1952, "While a university will, through its teachings, speed and direct the practical energies of a people, it must also shape and enrich their minds, preserve their culture, and create the right attitude towards life and living."

Graduands, I know you will take to heart the responsibilities that come with your degree – to have the right attitude towards life and living, including the vision and courage to distinguish yourselves as engaged citizens and make your mark wherever your future takes you.

As you begin this new adventure in your lives, I wish you all the best. Thank you.