

**Spring Convocation
St. John's, May 29 – June 1, 2012**

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

Welcome to spring convocation 2012. We are so pleased that you have joined us for what is always a special time in the life of a university.

It's a special time because nothing symbolizes the university's success more than our convocation ceremonies and the success and achievements of our students.

So I offer a special welcome and congratulations to all our graduating students.

I want to offer a special welcome to our honorary graduand, Shelagh Rogers. Ms. Rogers is no stranger to Newfoundland, having hosted the annual Writers at Woody Point Festival for many years.

I am sure everyone will recognize her voice having hosted such CBC shows as *This Morning* and *Sounds Like Canada*.

Ms. Rogers is being honoured for her contributions to Canadian broadcasting and to the public understanding of the problems of literacy and depression. We will hear more about her and from her later in this convocation.

I want to offer a special welcome to our honorary graduand, Sheila Fraser. The university is saluting her leadership and outstanding service to her profession, and to the people of Canada as our national auditor general – leadership and service that was characterized by transparency, professionalism, and responsible use of authority.

It can truly be said that she has our trust. During her time in office a *Readers' Digest* poll named her as one of the five most-trusted Canadians. We shall hear more about and from Ms. Fraser a little later in this convocation.

I want to offer a special welcome to our honorary graduand, Roberta Jamieson. Ms. Jamieson has enjoyed a distinguished career of "firsts." She was the first aboriginal woman to earn a law degree; the first non-parliamentarian to be appointed an *ex-officio* member of a House of Commons Committee; the first woman to be appointed ombudsperson of Ontario; and in December 2001, she was the first woman to be elected Chief of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory.

She is a leader and role model for both aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. Ms. Jamieson, you honour us with your presence. You will hear more about and from Ms. Jamieson later in this convocation.

Granduands, in just a few more minutes each of you will be admitted to the degree that you have earned and you will be conferred all the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with that degree.

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 distinguished family over 75,000 strong.

Today, I am sure, is one of the proudest moments in each of your lives. And while your parents, families, friends and professors are all proud and played a supporting role in your success, ultimately it was your efforts, dedication and talent that got you to today's convocation. So congratulations.

Every degree awarded today is the result of a personal journey requiring significant commitment and work, and worthy of considerable accolades as a full-time endeavour.

Yet every year our students amaze us with leadership and achievements above and beyond their required programs that distinguishes them at a national and international level. There are so many incredible stories, but I want to give you just a few examples.

Last week we learned that Nehraz Mahmud, an anthropology doctoral student, was awarded a Trudeau Scholarship. Valued at \$60,000 annually, it is the most prestigious award of its kind in Canada. Awarded by the Trudeau Foundation, the scholarship supports brilliant social sciences and humanities doctoral students who are focused on researching and sharing

innovative ideas that will help solve issues of critical importance to Canadians.

A couple of weeks ago, another student, Kyla Bruff, was named the winner of the 2012 Erasmus Mundus Scholarship, which will allow her to pursue graduate study in Europe for the next two years.

The award, which was established in 2007 by the European Commission, has a total value of approximately \$27,000 annually and is offered to between seven and 10 students from outside the European Union. She is the third Memorial University philosophy student in a row to be awarded the prestigious prize.

Also this month, Laura Pittman, a fifth-year mechanical engineering student was named the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education Co-op Student of the Year. The award is significant not only to Ms. Pittman, but also to the entire university. It is a major achievement and national recognition for the quality and success of our students and our co-operative education programs.

In January, Jamie Grandy, Chris Grant, Ian Aucoin and Tim Buchanan, all pharmacy students graduating this convocation session, were crowned 2012 national champions at the National Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns Compounding Competition, placing first against the other pharmacy schools in Canada.

Gina Colbourne, a nursing student also graduating today, won a national McGraw-Hill Ryerson Scholarship that is awarded based on academic and personal integrity, classroom engagement and initiative. No stranger to success, as a student she has also been awarded the Heart and Stroke Foundation Cardiovascular Student Award, the Canadian Council of Cardiovascular Nurses' Student Award, and the Canadian Institute of Health Research Professional Student Award.

And Memorial's Students in Free Enterprise, a multi-disciplinary team from across campus, did us proud again. A few weeks ago they were named the 2012 SIFE national champions in Calgary. They defeated 50 teams from universities across Canada to mark the sixth time in seven years that SIFE Memorial has taken top honours in the prestigious student competition. They now become Team Canada and will represent our country in the international SIFE competition in Washington, D.C. this fall.

Speaking of entrepreneurs, Mike Wahl, a PhD graduate student in the Faculty of Medicine and co-founder of Definitions Wellness Safety Services, was named the national champion by the Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship association.

As the top graduate student entrepreneur in Canada, he travelled to the 2011 global finals in New York City, where he took to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange to present his business to an international panel of entrepreneurs, renowned journalists and business luminaries. In

December, he was named the graduate student entrepreneur world champion by the entrepreneurs' organization.

And national distinction comes not only to our students. This month we also learned that our Distance Education, Learning and Teaching Support unit, or DELTS, received four national awards from the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education. The unit was recognized for excellence in the use of technology for teaching and learning, partnership/collaboration and student services and instructional design.

This kind of national and international recognition and accomplishment is happening every month at Memorial. And let me assure you that to achieve this distinction places us in rarified company world-wide.

Just last week it was announced that Canada placed third in a new ranking of national higher education systems based on data from 48 countries.

The review examined what makes a superior system, including investment by government and the private sector, research and its impact, creation of an educated workforce that meets societies' needs, international networks and diversity.

The United States and Sweden were ranked one and two. Then at third was Canada and following Canada in the rankings were Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, Australia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Well, I've said it before, when you live in this great country of ours, with this university in your own backyard, it's easy to forget that "world class" also applies to the home team.

There is so much to be proud of in the quality of our graduates, our faculty, staff and alumni, and in the quality and impact of the work that they do. Our reputation is founded on the accomplishments across all of our academic disciplines and we are leaders in so many areas.

And that's important because in today's complicated, globally connected, and competitive world no single discipline has a monopoly on understanding or on defining the pathway to success. This is perhaps best summed up in the words of the late Steve Jobs, founder of the Apple Corporation, arguably one of the most successful companies of our time.

[and I Quote]

"It is in Apple's DNA that technology alone is not enough – its technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our hearts sing."

So, convocation is a time for us to reflect on another incredible year of accomplishments and success across all of Memorial, as it continues its upward trajectory. Throughout the year, on an almost daily basis, you'll see stories of Memorial's success in the local, national and international media.

We also tell our stories of accomplishment and success regularly in our annual reports, such as our recent president's report titled *Great Minds Think Differently* and also in our *Gazette* newspaper, our *Research Matters* magazine, in our alumni magazine, *Luminus*, and of course on our web site.

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

We plan to celebrate 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 of 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 you, our newest, soon-to be alumni – to join us for the festivities.

When I walk around our campuses, I see pride in people's faces, secure in the knowledge that they are working and studying at an institution that is distinguishing itself as a nationally competitive, flag-ship, teaching-research university – a university unequivocally committed to the public good and its special obligation to the people of this great province.

And I am confident that in the years to come, these feelings of pride, hope, expectation and accomplishment will continue to grow. Memorial University 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 university solidly into the future.

Through broad internal and external consultation, we have laid the foundation for adjusting our course and setting priorities with our new research strategy, and teaching and learning framework.

And our public engagement framework, to build on our strengths in working with citizens, communities, industry and government, is in the final stages of approval – engagement to link teaching and learning and research and creative activity with the needs and opportunities across the province and beyond.

Our \$50 million *Dare To* fundraising campaign, focused on student financial support, academic excellence and physical infrastructure, is enjoying tremendous success.

We continue to have strong provincial government support and increased funding for the university, as once again demonstrated in this year's provincial budget.

As I mentioned on the day of the provincial budget, I believe this is the best budget for a university anywhere in Canada this year.

I want to acknowledge the minister who is representing the provincial government at this convocation session.

Minister, on behalf of the entire Memorial University community, I want to express our thanks for the ongoing support of your government.

The budget enables expansions of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and our Marine Institute, and most importantly it allocates resources to Memorial to plan for needed renewal and replacement of our out-of-date, decades-old, core science infrastructure here on our St. John's campus.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the official opening of the St. John's campus, which has an inventory of some new, modern buildings and facilities, and signs of the start of renewal.

But we also have a significant number of the initial older buildings that are well past starting to show their age.

Planning resources for renewal and replacement of our core science infrastructure is an important first step in addressing our space crunch, which is already limiting enrolment growth and access, and impacting our learning and research environment.

Further steps are needed, but we are delighted to move forward with this important initiative and we will find ways to move forward with other

important infrastructure initiatives, like the renewal and re-opening of the Reid Theatre, as well as development of aboriginal student and programming space.

And as I said, renewal has started. On our campuses, we are already seeing more than \$250 million worth of infrastructure projects underway or completed – new residences in St. John’s and Corner Brook, an expansion to medicine and genetics research, and the completion of the Arts and Science extension at the Grenfell Campus.

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

In 1949, in the debate over the legislation that would make Memorial a degree-granting institution, our first premier, Joey Smallwood, had this to say about the heights to which this university should aspire. He said:

“There is no reason, if we have the vision and if we have the courage..., why the [Memorial] University of Newfoundland for its size should not be the most distinguished university in the whole world.”

I think this is a wonderful vision and the province deserves no less.

Graduating students, I want you to think about those words.

A university distinguishes itself by the collective actions, accomplishments and success of its faculty, staff, students and alumni. By what they all do as

active engaged citizens to make the world a better place to live – safer, more prosperous, more sustainable, more interesting.

So it is our collective challenge to have the vision and courage to build and create a distinguished Memorial University on the world stage.

Graduands, you have already had a role in this – and you have a role yet to come as alumni.

Today, your university community is publically acknowledging that you have acquired the breadth and depth of learning, experience and know-how associated with your degree, and it will confer upon you the rights and privileges that come with that degree.

It is now up to you to take to heart the responsibilities that also come with your degree – to have the vision and courage to distinguish yourself and make your mark in Newfoundland and Labrador, and across the country and the world.

I am confident that you will, and I wish each of you the best as you leave here today to begin the next adventures in your lives.

Thank you.