

## Grenfell Campus Convocation

Report by Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President and Vice-chancellor

Friday, Oct. 5, 10:00 a.m.

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Good morning everyone. Welcome to fall convocation 2012, a very special time when we celebrate the success of the university through the success of our students.

So, of course, a special welcome and congratulations to our graduating students. The entire university community, your family and friends share in your joy and your sense of accomplishment.

We are here today because you committed to, and completed, the many required hours of study and practice. And you worked hard and diligently to meet the stringent academic requirements. This is truly a milestone in each of your lives.

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

I want to acknowledge two distinguished individuals who wished they could be here, but unfortunately could not join us today: General Rick Hillier, who finished his appointment as chancellor of Memorial last month; and Dr. Susan Dyer Knight who has been appointed as Memorial's new chancellor.

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.

Whether as chair of *Dare To*, our fundraising campaign, or at these convocation ceremonies where he presided as chancellor, Rick Hillier served as a role model to thousands of our graduates, their families and our alumni.

I know many join me in expressing the thanks of the entire university community to Rick and also to his wife, Joyce, who as a team represented and supported Memorial

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selflessly, here in the province, across the country, and internationally. We also congratulate him on his induction into the Order of Canada just this past month.

And on behalf of the entire university community, I am pleased to welcome our new chancellor, Dr. Susan Dyer Knight. In addition to national and international accomplishments and recognition, Dr. Knight has been involved with Memorial in various capacities over the years and is very familiar with the university.

She is a wonderful choice as our new chancellor, and a most welcome addition to the Memorial community.

We will of course welcome her more appropriately during a formal chancellor's installation ceremony and celebration. I know that you join me in extending our best wishes to her as we look forward to her contributions as Memorial's seventh chancellor.

Joining us on stage today is Sheila Ashton representing the Board of Regents of Memorial University. Our members of the board give generously of their time and expertise and we're lucky to have them contribute so much to our success.

Also on-stage is Grenfell Campus' newest associate vice president, Dr. Antony Card. Antony took up the reins as associate vice-president (for Grenfell Campus research) this summer, so this is his first convocation in his new role. I know that you join me in welcoming Dr. Card.

Finally I want to recognize Mr. Glenn Collins, who is retiring from his role as university registrar and secretary of Senate this month after 42 years of service to the university.

Fortunately for us, we will continue to benefit from his guidance and experience in his part-time appointment as executive director of the Board of Regents.

Glenn has been a tremendous asset to this university over many years, and certainly to me personally as president these past two years. Glenn, on behalf of the entire community, I thank you for your years of service and wish you all the best.

Convocation is a time for us to reflect on another incredible year of accomplishments and success across all of Memorial, as it continues to distinguish itself as a nationally

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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.

Dr. Mary Bluechardt , vice-president (Grenfell campus) will have more to say on Grenfell's accomplishments and progress in her report to convocation.

But let me tell you there is so much to celebrate. We have enjoyed a series of accomplishments and events that together are creating an irresistible momentum, moving Grenfell Campus solidly into the future.

We have a new university administrative structure and team of VPs – with Dr. Mary Bluechardt as an integral member – that acknowledges and wholeheartedly supports the multi-campus nature of Memorial.

We have an outstanding leadership team here on the Grenfell Campus who recognize and support the important role Grenfell has for university education in the whole province.

Grenfell's enrolment is on the rise, with a 4.3 per cent increase this fall over last. This spring, Senate approved a new bachelor of science in physics, bringing to 17 the number of degree programs available at Grenfell.

A new transfer program with College of the North Atlantic has been approved and more are planned, along with new partnerships with the Labrador Institute, planned consolidation of the Western School of Nursing, and a new English as a Second Language program has been approved.

This September, Grenfell welcomed its first graduate students on campus for its master of arts in environmental policy, and in the coming years the number of graduate programs and graduate students will continue to grow.

Infrastructure improvements continue with the construction of the new residence and the opening this summer of the beautiful new Arts and Science building extension that is

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already having a significant impact on academic programming and student success, and will serve us for decades to come.

In the immediate future is the start of construction of the new environmental science research labs and the associated hiring of new faculty and technical personnel with tremendous implications for expanded research, and teaching and learning in environmental science and new graduate programming at Grenfell.

Next year Grenfell will host the international Community University Expo. What better way to spread the word about what Grenfell has to offer and what an amazing place this is, than with this campus and this city full of researchers, educators, students, policy makers and community builders from around the world? I just know we're going to shine.

And with the new branding strategy, launched just two days ago highlighting the uniqueness and strengths of Grenfell Campus, while leveraging deep connections as part of the Memorial University family, it is clear that Grenfell's story is just beginning to be told, and the sky really is the limit.

Of course, a key part of that success story is the strong provincial government support and increased funding for Grenfell Campus and the entire university, tremendous support as once again demonstrated in this year's provincial budget.

I want to acknowledge the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills, 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. It really does make a difference.

For our entire history, the partnership between the university and the provincial government has been a key component of Memorial's success and aspirations.

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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.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I think that is a wonderful vision and in my opinion the people of this province deserve nothing less. For its size and mandate, Memorial University will be one of the most distinguished universities in the world.

It will distinguish 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 province and the world a better place to live, safer, more prosperous, more sustainable, more interesting.

And through that, let me assure you, we will continue to meet our obligations to the people of this great province, including those who live in rural Newfoundland and in Labrador.

And of course, we cannot and should not do it alone.

Receiving final endorsement at Senate just a few weeks ago, our Public Engagement Framework lays the foundation for adjusting our course and setting priorities that build on our strengths in working with citizens, communities, industry and government – priorities that will integrate our teaching and learning, and research and creative activity, with the needs and opportunities across the province and beyond.

Speaking at a special convocation in 1975, marking the official opening of what would become Grenfell Campus, then-president M.O. Morgan asked, rhetorically: Where is Memorial University located? And he answered:

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“I suggest it has no fixed abode in any structure or any community. It is now part of the social and cultural fabric of our society. It embodies the aspirations of our people and their pride in themselves. It will survive and it will thrive.”

I have no doubt that here in Western Newfoundland, the people, institutions and places that Grenfell serves will help us ensure that this campus maintains an active focus on the economy, culture and sustainable future of this region.

So I would like to thank our community leaders and other west coast partners for their unwavering commitment and support of Grenfell Campus, Memorial University – commitment and support to meet 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 as students, and you have a role yet to come as alumni and also as engaged citizens.

Memorial is now part of 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.

Please, do us proud. Thank you.

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