



# Convocation 2018

## June 2, 2018

### Principal Michael Goldbloom, C.M.'s Address

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#### Saturday morning

Mr. Chancellor

Dr. Margaret MacMillan

Dr. Alexander Reford

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#### Saturday afternoon

Mr. Chancellor

Dr. Alanis Obomsawin

Ms. Aileen O'Rafferty

Members of the Class of 2018

Members of Convocation

Families and friends.

Every year, for 175 years, Bishop's has celebrated this special day in the life of our university.

The central role of the Chancellor, the academic dress, the Latin citations, and the other formalities of the Convocation proceedings, remind us that the idea of the university as a community of learning dates back to the Middle Ages and has endured through the centuries.

Like all great institutions, Bishop's has evolved over the decades as each generation has been charged with ensuring that the University meets the needs of its time.

We can all take pride in knowing that although much has changed, Bishop's continues to pursue its core mission of offering a sound and liberal education to undergraduate students.

We remain focused on being an institution of choice for outstanding young people seeking academic excellence and a rich undergraduate experience.

We strive:

- to be a university that instills confidence, courage, curiosity and a sense of responsibility in its students.
- to be a place that nurtures personal and intellectual freedom and fosters enduring friendships.

This year has been one of progress and achievement, but it has also been marked by profound loss.

While on a reading week vacation in the Dominican Republic with 30 Bishop's classmates, Ben Houtman, died in a tragic fall.

On March 14<sup>th</sup> our community came together to celebrate Ben's life, to mourn, and to express to Ben's parents, Krysta and John, that Ben was a much-loved member of the Bishop's community.

Ben was a vibrant young man who reached out to anyone who felt alone to make them feel welcome and included.

His exemplified Bishop's values.

He brought joy to life and to everyone around him.

He is with us in spirit today.

May his memory be a blessing and may his life be an inspiration to everyone who knew him.

At its meeting in May, our academic Senate voted to bestow a posthumous degree on Ben.

Ben's parents are extraordinary people who in a time of excruciating grief have focused on supporting Ben's friends – who in turn have expressed their love for them.

We are honoured to have Krysta and John with us today, and I would ask them to come forward to receive Ben's diploma from the Chancellor.

There is no easy segue from remembering a lost friend to celebrating his classmates.

But his parents and his friends have said that Ben would want today to be a celebration.

Life and Bishop's must go on.

We are proud that our graduating students consistently tell us that we have delivered on the promises we made to them when they chose Bishop's.

This year, several external assessments have confirmed that our students value highly their experiences here.

In recent years, our students have ranked Bishop's at the top for student satisfaction amongst Canada's small undergraduate universities in the Maclean's rankings.

And this year, for the first time, we were number one amongst all of Canada's universities, regardless of size.

And our students also ranked our professors, administrative and student life staff first.

All of which contributed to our being the most student-recommended university in Canada.

So we have had a good year.

Much of Bishop's endures over time, our heritage buildings, our bucolic campus, and most importantly our focus on a liberal education for undergraduates.

But, it is also true that each generation of students reinvents the University.

And the class of 2018 has contributed to Bishop's being an intellectually vibrant, ambitious and caring community.

J'ai été vivement impressionné par les efforts de nos finissants afin que les valeurs fondatrices de notre université soient transmises à la prochaine génération d'étudiants qui, à leur tour, sauront les adopter et les transmettre.

Ils ont démontré aux étudiants qui les suivent que les valeurs fondamentales que sont la curiosité, la rigueur, le respect d'autrui, l'intégrité et l'engagement sont des valeurs sûres et, ce faisant, ils ont marqué de façon positive leur université.

Et grâce à nos étudiants et toute notre communauté universitaire, je peux dire que Bishop's a eu une année exceptionnelle.

Although we speak of the "Bishop's bubble", we do not operate in isolation from the world beyond Lennoxville.

Every year we sponsor a refugee student.

The University waives tuition for the first year and provides a room in residence.

Our food service provider, Sodexo, contributes a free meal plan and a committee of volunteers engages in fundraising to provide support for the students.

The Refugee Sponsorship Group held its annual garage sale a few weeks ago.

This great community effort raised over \$8,000 for our refugee students.

We had students from more than 50 countries enrolled this year.

So the world really does meet on our campus.

The Donald Lectures series also helped bring the world to Bishop's.

Dr. William Deresiewicz, an author and former Yale University professor, began this year's Lecture series with an insightful talk about the value of a liberal education.

He spoke particularly about the importance of fostering self-discovery and independent thinking in undergraduate education.

Senator Murray Sinclair, who chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, came to us via live stream from Thunder Bay where he was finalizing his independent investigation of the Thunder Bay Police Board.

Senator Sinclair helped us to understand better our history and how to chart a path towards reconciliation with the indigenous peoples of this land.

Ms Maggie MacDonnell, a teacher in the Inuit village of Salluit, one of Quebec's northernmost communities, who won the \$1 million 2017 Global Teacher Prize, delivered a powerful and inspiring address about the challenges facing many young people in Inuit communities.

She helped each of us understand how one person with determination and an open heart can help change the world.

Our fourth Donald Lecturer was the 'Man in Motion' Rick Hansen.

He talked about how his 40,000 km journey around the world in a wheelchair has served as a springboard for him to work to change attitudes, and to advocate for the creation of accessible spaces to permit people with disabilities to contribute fully to society.

As a result of Rick's talk, we are working with his foundation to have an accessibility review conducted on three of our buildings

Dr. Amal Elsana Alh-Jooj, a Bedouin/Palestinian Israeli was our final Lecturer.

Dr. Alh'jooj was the first woman of her community to attend university and at the age of 17 founded the first Bedouin women's organization.

Dr. Alh'jooj's inspiring and empowering lecture touched on her personal journey as a woman in a patriarchal society and the importance of social work as an academic discipline and profession.

We held the first Bishop's Forum.

Young English-speaking Quebecers, aged 18 to 24, from all across Quebec gathered on campus for a week-long conference designed to equip them to advocate for and effect the changes in Quebec society they would like to see.

The world not only came to Bishop's this year, we went out to engage with it.

### Saturday morning

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Under the guidance of Dr. Sarah-Myriam Martin-Brulé, a group of our students attended the Model United Nations in New York.

Our students, representing Jordan, received the Outstanding Delegation Award, which is granted to only the top 5% of delegations.

And one of our students was recognized for having presented the best of the 200 papers submitted to the General Assembly.

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In March, Dr. Martin-Brûlé hosted a conference on women's involvement in different aspects of international security with a highly distinguished group of panelists.

The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Quebec Universities English Undergraduate Conference took place in March. It is the largest undergraduate research conference in the Humanities in Canada. Students from 37 universities from across Canada and the United States participated.

Chloe Soucy, an English major who just crossed the stage, was awarded the prestigious 3M National Student Fellowship.

The 3M Fellowship honours up to ten students at Canadian post-secondary institutions for their leadership.

### Saturday afternoon

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Bishop's was one of sixteen teams that participated in the Network of International Business Schools Case Competition that took place in Guatemala.

The Bishop's team, coached by Dr. Robert Palmer, defeated teams from Belgium, Finland, the United Kingdom, Germany and Denmark.

And they were the runners-up in the finals against the Dublin Institute of Technology.

Another Williams School of Business team won bronze at the "Battle on Bay" National Finance Case Competition held at Ryerson University.

And later this month Bishop's will co-host with the Université de Sherbrooke the annual conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Our Bishop's Exceptional Student Talent program (B.E.S.T.) has enabled a new group of students to pursue their diverse and ambitious dreams.

Here is a sample of what some of our students will be doing over the next few months:

### Morning

- Interning in a lab at Oxford University to learn how to use brain-imaging technologies for pain research
- Performing in a play at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the world's largest arts festival

- Collecting information on bird species as part of the Breeding Bird Census at the Long Point Bird Observatory on Lake Erie
- Interning with a clinical psychologist in Togo.
- Attending the Kodaly Institute's Music Summer School in Hungary.

## Afternoon

- Presenting a paper at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Sustainable Development in Rome
- Studying the demographics of the low-literacy Anglophone population here in the Eastern Townships.
- Participating in a two-week International Business and Management seminar at the University of Cambridge

It is reassuring to see that our students are engaged in the world, because there is much to be alarmed about.

We are experiencing a period of illiberal populism in many parts of the world where we are witnessing a relentless attack on truth, science, journalism and the ideals of altruism, integrity, trust and human solidarity.

Almost every day we are confronted with the difference between formal authority and moral authority.

As Dov Seidman has said:

“Leaders with moral authority trust people with the truth – however bright or dark.

They're animated by values – especially humility – and principles of probity, so they do the right things, especially when they're difficult or unpopular.

And they enlist people in a noble purpose and onto journeys worthy of their dedication. ”

We need to advocate for, support and exemplify moral leadership.

Whether we are involved in a university – or if I may say so, a public broadcaster – we have a responsibility to seek out and disseminate truth.

So we are counting on the class of 2018 not to be passive bystanders.

Never to be silent or indifferent in the face of racism, discrimination, injustice, inequality intimidation or lies.

Each of us will have our own stories about what made this year unique.

Let me share three of mine with you.

As we start each year, I meet with the first year students in Centennial Theatre, and I ask them to indicate where they come from.

When I asked: « Is anyone from Central America? » a student raised her hand.

So I asked her: “Where in Central America?”

She replied: “Denver, Colorado”.

I was reassured to know that we have an Environmental Studies and Geography Department at Bishop’s.

Early in the Fall semester a first-year student came up to me in the stands at a Lacrosse game.

He said: “Principal I just want to say that what I already love about Bishop’s is that I feel safe to be myself.”

I can’t imagine a more positive endorsement of what we strive to be.

And then last week, the type of experience which is going to happen to all Bishop’s grads throughout your lives, happened to me.

I’m not an angler, but I was invited to learn about the work of the the Nature Conservancy of Canada on a fishing trip in a large protected area just east of Montebello in Quebec.

At 4:30 in the morning we prepared to go out onto Lac Papineau.

We were told that we would be joined on the lake by a team of scientists from four universities who are studying lake trout.

We were three in our boat with a guide.

And I was lucky to be the first person to land a fish.

Our guide contacted the scientists by walky-talky.

They came over in their boat and proceeded to implant a battery and sonar in my fish so that they will be able to follow it as it moves about the lake for the next three years.

A professor from the University of Wisconsin was charged with recording when and where the fish was caught and who caught it.

Just as I finished spelling my name for him, a young man from the back of their boat said:

“I thought that was him.

He’s my Principal.



He is going to give me my diploma next week. ”

So if I can run into a Bishop’s grad at 5 a.m. on a remote lake in Western Quebec, I assure you that you will run into Bishop’s grads everywhere throughout your lives.

So keep wearing purple.

It will serve you well.

Jason Charlebois, please stand up and show everyone how big my fish was.

Thank you.

There is not time to review all of the accomplishments of our diverse and multi-talented faculty, and it is perilous to single anyone out.

But let me mention a few just to give you a bit of the flavour of the academic vitality of our university.

Dr. Jamie Crooks of the Department of Philosophy published a new monograph entitled *We Find Ourselves Put to the Test: A Reading of the Book of Job*.

Dr. Crooks explores the ways in which the Book of Job can help the reader gain a greater appreciation for personal loss and suffering.

Dr. Shawn Malley of the English Department published *Excavating the Future: Archaeology and Geopolitics in Contemporary North American Science Fiction and Television*.

His book draws links between science fiction representations and political conflicts.

Dr. Jenn Cianca of the Department of Classical Studies and Liberal Arts is set to launch her new monograph entitled *Sacred Ritual, Profane Space: The Roman House as Early Christian Meeting Place*.

In her work, Dr. Cianca explores the use of the domestic dwelling as a space to perform worship by early Christians and Romans and how these sacred spaces eventually moved out of the home to collective sites.

Dr. Heather Lawford, of our Psychology Department has been awarded a Tier 2 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant of up to \$100,000 annually for five years.

Her research focusses on youth engagement and youth development.

Dr. David Webster of the History Department co-edited a collection of essays entitled « Flowers in the Wall: Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste, Indonesia and Melanesia.

Dr. Webster was recently named an Associate of the Wilson Institute of Canadian History.

Dr. Vicki Chartrand from our Sociology Department conducts research on missing and murdered indigenous women.

In the past year, she appeared as an expert witness before the Commission leading the national investigation on this devastating issue.

Dr. Trygve Ugland, from our Politics and International Studies Department, explores how Canada's immigration model has been the inspiration for the reformation of immigration policies in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, in his recent book, *Policy Learning from Canada: Reforming Scandinavian Immigration and Integration Policies*.

Drs. Sunny Lau and Corinne Haigh in the School of Education and a team of researchers from the Université de Sherbrooke and Simon Fraser University, are examining how children studying in their first or second language develop their writing skills.

The Dean of the Williams School of Business, Dr. Francine Turmel, was one of 18 chartered professional accountants who received the title of Fellow in recognition of the honour she has brought to the accounting profession.

One of our Business Professors, Dr. Michael Teed, is part of a national team of researchers funded by the Mental Health Commission of Canada to study the implementation of the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Dr. Jade Savage of the Biology Department has received funding from the Infections Diseases and Climate Change Fund for her project studying ticks in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick using a web platform dedicated to image-based tick identification.

Dr. Mihai Scarlete of the Chemistry Department and his research partner, from *l'Université de Sherbrooke*, received a U.S. patent for their invention which aims to improve solar cells. The funding of their first patent allowed Bishop's clean room to be built in the Johnson Building.

Dr. Jason Rowe, of our Physics Department, who is a Canada Research Chair in Exoplanet Astrophysics, will be conducting research investigating the atmospheric characteristics of extra-solar planets. This will aid the Canadian Space Agency in designing spacecraft to further the study of astrophysics outside our solar system.

Bishop's continued to pursue its strategic alliance with Acadia, Mount Allison and St. Francis Xavier universities through the Maple League.

By working together we are seeking to extend our four institutions' common objectives of providing students from across Canada and the world with the highest quality undergraduate education in a residential setting.

There were some growing pains along the way, but we are learning how to make this work.

Next year four professors – one from each of our universities – and each from a different discipline- will be joining together through our video-conferencing facilities to team teach a course.

So it was a year of innovation and achievement.

The Bishop's University singers celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an ambitious season including two performances of JS Bach's B Minor Mass at the Abbaye de Saint-Benoit-du-lac and the Eglise St-Francois Xavier de Bromont

And we developed a cross-country ski trail on our golf course. It is the only cross-country trail on a university campus in Canada to be certified by the Federation International de Ski.

It was also a year in which we addressed some critical issues on our campus.

We hired our first Indigenous Student Support and Community Liaison Officer.

And we are working on a project to convert Divinity House into an Indigenous Meeting and Learning Centre.

We reached an agreement with the Quebec Government which will rectify the chronic underfunding of our University.

The enhanced funding means that we can move from being preoccupied with our survival to focusing on how we can sustain excellence.

We have begun to mobilize the entire University to consider how to ensure that our academic reputation is commensurate with our academic quality.

Last year we launched a campaign to prevent sexual violence including giving Bystander Intervention Training to the entire incoming class.

And then in the fall we had two incidents of sexual assault, not on our campus but in Lennoxville.

I was impressed at how our community rallied together to ensure everyone's safety.

We held our 6<sup>th</sup> annual Mental Health and Wellness Week and continued our efforts to decrease the stigma related to mental illness, and to raise awareness about how to facilitate mental health.

We are a public university and our finances are in large measure dependent on government funding. But private philanthropy has always been and will continue to be a key factor in Bishop's capacity to achieve its high ambitions.

In March we completed the most successful capital campaign in our history.

Under the dynamic leadership of Daniel Fournier and Tim Griffin we blew past our goal of \$30 Million and went almost 50% over target by raising \$44 million.

The funds raised will help preserve the Bishop's that we cherish— its small classes, its residential character, the access to professors and the life-changing experiences that make it so special.

We have raised several million dollars for financial support for students.

The Donald Lecture Series and the B.E.S.T. student grant program have been endowed and will be permanent features of Bishop's.

Philanthropy combined with Government support will allow us to renovate our science labs, the New Side residences and the ground floor of the Hamilton building.

We are on the verge of completing a \$17 million renovation of the Library.

I recognize that it is bittersweet for our graduating students to see that the new Library and Learning Commons is nearing completion and will open only a few months after you leave.

But we are enormously grateful to the class of 2018 for joining with students from other classes in donating one million dollars to this project.

One of the most powerful messages of this gift is that our students have wanted to support future generations of students.

In current parlance you have chosen to 'pay it forward'.

You won't be here to benefit from the renovated library but, as with the alumni who have preceded you, you have wanted to support the next generation of Bishop's students.

Individually and collectively, the Class of 2018 consistently responded to the needs of people less fortunate than themselves here in Sherbrooke and around the world.

Whether it was:

Raising funds for ALS research,

Supporting a local mental health organization or

Raising funds for our refugee students

our students have consistently given of their time, their energy and their resources to help others.

Sarah-Kim Bergeron, a Master's student in Education, won this year's USPORTS Community Service award in women's soccer for her outstanding achievements in soccer, academics and community engagement.

Not only was this the first time that a Bishop's student has won this award, Sarah-Kim was the first Quebec student-athlete to do so.

So we owe a great debt of gratitude to the Class of 2018 for how they have cared for each other, for this institution and for the world.

And now I would like to ask the Class of 2018 to rise together so that we can express our gratitude to them - not for what they have achieved individually - but for what they have contributed collectively to Bishop's.

As I look out at all of you, I am reminded that it was late on a September night, only a few years ago, that many of you stood together on the lawn in front of the Principal's residence singing at the top of your lungs that

you were conditioned to your fate,

you would never graduate,

and that you would stay here forever more.

Well, fortunately, you were wrong about never graduating, but I suspect that you were right when you sang the line that "College days will linger ever in our hearts".

You will certainly linger in ours.

And perhaps the words about never graduating were not meant to be taken literally.

Perhaps « never graduating » means never losing your sense of curiosity and your joy in learning.

Perhaps «never graduating» means never ceasing to respect and value people who are different from you.

Perhaps “never graduating” means never being afraid to take risks in pursuit of your dreams.

Vous avez fait honneur à votre université, à vos familles et, surtout, à vous-même.

C’est donc avec une grande fierté mêlée d’un peu de tristesse que nous vous disons au revoir.

You have done your university, your families and yourselves proud.

It is with a bittersweet feeling that we bid you adieu.

We do so, however, with confidence that you leave here ready and determined to choose your own paths, to further the boundaries of knowledge, to care for our planet, and to do your part in the never-ending quest to advance peace, justice, equality and prosperity in the world.

Nous suivrons vos réalisations avec grand intérêt.

It will be exciting to watch you.

Congratulations for all you have achieved.

Thank you for all you have contributed.

So celebrate together tonight. I know that you are good at that.

And then go out and use the knowledge and skills you acquired at Bishop’s to make the better world you believe in.

Congratulations.