

Notes for an address by Michael Goldbloom for
Spring Convocation Ceremonies 2009
May 31st, 2009, John H. Price Sports Complex

Mr. Chancellor

Dr. Chantal Hébert / Dr. Nancy Knowlton

Dr. Albert Schultz / Dr. Paul Martin

Members of the Class of 2009

Members of Convocation

Families and friends.

Every year, for 166 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 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.

During this, my first year as Principal of Bishop's, I have been particularly impressed by the efforts made by the students who are graduating today to ensure that the core values of Bishop's are transmitted to and embraced by the next generation of students.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Class of 2009 for how they have cared for this great institution.

Earlier in these proceedings we applauded them for their achievements.

And now I would like to ask the Class of 2009 to rise together one more time so that we can express our appreciation to them – not for what they have ACHIEVED - but for what they have CONTRIBUTED to Bishop's.

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

We had a tangible demonstration this morning of the seamless link which connects the generations, when our former Chancellor, Alex Paterson, joined in conferring a Bachelor of Arts on his grandson and namesake.

And this afternoon we will bestow an honorary degree on the Right Honourable Paul Martin, just as we did 53 years ago when we conferred an honorary degree on his father, the first Honourable Paul Martin.

These lines of continuity remain unbroken because this University has been – and continues to be - a place that nurtures personal and intellectual freedom and fosters enduring friendships.

I would like to conclude by saying to the Class of 2009, that you are the best, the smartest, the most talented, the most promising class of Bishop's graduates that I have ever known.

The fact that you are the ONLY class of Bishop's graduates that I have ever known may diminish somewhat this high praise.

But what cannot be diminished is that you are my first graduating class and you will remain forever in my heart.

You helped me see the University through some turbulent waters and contributed to charting a new course.

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

I know that this may not sound particularly erudite, but what I really want to say to you today is ‘don’t go’.

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

We do so, however, with confidence that you leave here ready and determined

to do your part in the never-ending quest to advance peace, prosperity and justice in the world

to choose your own paths

to risk failure

to further the boundaries of knowledge, and

to care for our planet.

It will be exciting to watch you.