



**Notes for an address by Michael Goldbloom on his installation as
The 18th Principal & Vice-Chancellor of Bishop's University**
October 17, 2008, Centennial Theatre

Chancellor Scott Griffin, Corporation President Robert (Squee) Gordon, Dr. Irving Abella, Dr. Rosalie Abella, Archbishop Bruce Stavert, former Chancellor Alex Patterson, former Principals Hugh Scott, Janyne Hodder and Jonathan Rittenhouse, le recteur de l'université de Sherbrooke, Bruno-Marie Béchard, the Principal of Concordia University, Judith Woodsworth, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of McGill University, Robert Rabinovitch, le Directeur de la Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, Daniel Zizian, Members of the Fall 2008 graduating class, members of the Bishop's community, friends and family.

It is a great honour and a daunting responsibility to become the 18th Principal and Vice-Chancellor of this historic institution.

I have been reflecting on the number 18 because numbers can have significant symbolic importance in our lives.

The world was reminded this past summer of the significance of the number eight in the Chinese tradition, when the Beijing Olympics' Opening Ceremonies began at 8 pm on the 8th day of the 8th month of 2008.

I have just been installed as the 18th Principal of Bishop's.

The number 18 is a lucky number in the Jewish tradition because the two Hebrew letters which represent 18 – Chet, the eighth letter of the alphabet and Yud, the tenth letter, together form the word CHAI which in Hebrew means life.

And I can say that today the number 18 is, indeed, a lucky number in my life.

I have been fortunate throughout my life to be surrounded by family, friends and colleagues who have taught me, who have guided me and who have supported me.

I am profoundly touched that so many of you have made the effort to be here today.

My path from journalist to lawyer to community activist to newspaper publisher to university administrator has not been conventional.

It certainly was not planned.

But as I stand here today, it does feel that these different experiences have all been in preparation for the responsibilities I have been asked to take on as Principal of Bishop's.

I have always been drawn to institutions that have a high public purpose.

I think that is the common thread which runs through Alliance Quebec, The Ville Marie Social Service Centre, Selwyn House School, The Montreal YMCA, The Gazette, The Toronto Star, McGill University; and now Bishop's.

It is the possibility of contributing to the high purpose of this great institution which has drawn me here.

It is Bishop's 165-year history of preparing young people to go out and improve the world- and the opportunity and responsibility to sustain that tradition - which I find so compelling.

I have had a special affection for this university ever since the day – 46 years ago – when I first came here to witness an Honorary Degree being conferred upon my paternal grandfather, Dr. Alton Goldbloom.

My grandfather was the son of Lithuanian parents who came to Canada in the 1870's to escape persecution and to seek freedom and opportunity.

My great-grandfather was a peddler and my great-grandparents' early years in Canada were very hard.

Their first three children all died before the age of two.

My superstitious great-grandparents decided to confound the Angel of Death, who had taken their first three children, by calling my grandfather "Alter", meaning "the old one", which was Americanized to "Alton".

In spite of these precautions, during his first year of life, my grandfather fell ill with pneumonia and lay close to death's door.

He was looked after by Dr. William Molson, of the famous brewing family, who was the physician to the poor Jews of Montreal whom he attended without fee.

My great-grandmother never tired of talking of Dr. Molson and how he had sat at the crib side in their hovel on St. Antoine Street caring for my grandfather.

She hoped that Alton would one day become a doctor and would treat the poor as Dr. Molson had treated him.

He did so, and consequently on May 26, 1962 Bishop's chose to honour him.

There were several people on the dais with my grandfather that day who I would like to mention:

1. John H. Molson, the then-President of the Bishop's Corporation and a descendant of Dr. William Molson, who had cared for my grandfather;
2. Mr. Justice D.C. Abbott, the then-Chancellor of Bishop's and grandfather of Will Abbott who a few weeks ago hosted a gathering in his home to introduce me to our Toronto alumni; and
3. Mr. George Bourke, a fellow honorary degree recipient and grandfather of my oldest friend, Andrew Bourke, who is here today.

I think that these connections remind us that a university is a continuum which links who we have been - to who we are - to who we hope to be.

In her installation address last year, the new President of Harvard, Drew Faust, said that inaugural addresses are "by definition pronouncements by individuals who don't yet know what they are talking about".

I agree that it would be premature for me to set out a detailed plan for Bishop's, but it is not too soon to share with you my early assessment of our strengths, challenges and opportunities.

We have many strengths:

- A focused and coherent mission of providing the benefits of a sound liberal education to undergraduate students
- Faculty whose first passion and priority is teaching
- An intimate learning environment in which our faculty and staff give students the personal attention they require
- A university where students have the chance to make a difference, where opportunities abound for discovering and developing talents and assuming leadership roles.
- A collegial and civil community in which people genuinely care about each other and their institution
- A beautiful, historic and safe campus in this glorious setting of the rolling hills of the Eastern Townships; and
- A fiercely loyal alumni who appreciate what the University gave them and who are dedicated to ensuring that succeeding generations of students have the opportunities that they had to learn and grow at Bishop's.

All of these qualities contribute to a unique and special community which I am enjoying getting to know.

I have been particularly impressed by the dedication of our non-academic staff who are key contributors to the character of Bishop's.

Their commitment to our students was evident, for example, when the Residence Office stayed open almost day and night for the entire opening weekend to ensure that our new students were welcomed warmly into their new home away from home.

I have also enjoyed the opportunity to meet with our faculty.

Our Vice-Principal, Michael Childs, arranged for me to meet a cross-section of our professors during my first few weeks.

And so one day I found myself in the office of Dr. Jade Savage, a professor in our department of Biological Sciences.

Dr. Savage's passion is flies.

And I must admit that I never realized how fascinating house flies could be.

Dr. Savage explained to me that one of the reasons she chose to come to Bishop's is that she can take her students on a field trip by simply walking out the classroom door.

I think she said that if I had a few minutes, we could go outside and discover a new fly species.

Her passion for her research is infectious.

Whether it is Professor Savage looking at flies through her microscope, or Professor Lorne Nelson looking at the stars through his telescope, it is exciting to be surrounded by such talented people who are expanding the boundaries of knowledge.

As much as I have enjoyed meeting our faculty and staff, what I have enjoyed most is meeting our students.

I would like to introduce six of them to you because in meeting them you will gain a great insight into Bishop's.

I invited them to join us here today and I would ask that they stand up as I introduce them:

1. Ronan O'Beirne is from Halifax.

I met Ronan because he was assigned by The Campus – our student newspaper – to do a profile of the new Principal.

Ronan's passion is the theatre.

He chose Bishop's because of the strength of our drama program.

In his first year he performed in two plays and worked backstage on another.

2. (Hadja) Fanta Diabaté vient de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Elle a été élevée en parlant français et sa langue native du Mandingo.

Son père, ses deux frères et sa soeur ont émigré au Canada il y a un an, et elle a étudié l'anglais à Montréal durant la dernière année.

Elle est inscrite dans notre programme de sciences politiques à Bishop's et elle a l'intention d'étudier le droit.

3. Marc-Antoine Morin vient de St-Georges-de-Beauce.

Il étudie les sciences politiques et les langues modernes.

Il a choisi Bishop's parce qu'il veut être un journaliste et il veut être parfaitement bilingue.

En fait, il étudie également l'allemand et l'espagnol.

4. Lesley Tarasoff is a fourth-year student from Castlegar, a small town in the southern interior of British Columbia.

She is majoring in History and Women's Studies with a particular interest in understanding how systems of inequality have been constructed, perpetuated and subsequently challenged.

She is a founder of our new Diversity Centre and is a nominee for a Rhodes scholarship.

5. Ngor Deng Garang fled with his family from Sudan to a refugee camp in Kenya when he was eight years old.

He grew up in Kenya and came to Bishop's two years ago through our Refugee Student Sponsorship Committee.

Since 1992 the Committee has sponsored 22 refugees to pursue their studies and to begin their lives over again in peace and security.

Ngor is in his second year at Bishop's.

He is studying Biochemistry and he intends to study Pharmacy.

6. Jamie Lazarovits is from Toronto and intends to be a physician.

He spent this past summer in Peru working in an orphanage.

He is raising funds to support a Peruvian dentist who wishes to set up a medical clinic in one of the most impoverished areas of Peru.

What do these six students have in common?

Well, the first thing is that for different reasons they came to see me during my first weeks on the job.

What is more significant is that they chose Bishop's because of the challenges and opportunities it presents for them.

These are not students who were looking to hide in the relative anonymity of a large institution.

You can't hide in the back of a classroom that only has five rows and in which the professor knows your name.

We are fortunate in Canada to have a diverse system of universities. As a small, residential, primarily undergraduate, liberal arts institution Bishop's is not for everyone. But it can be the best place for a young person who wants to learn to lead.

I think that is one of Bishop's critical responsibilities – preparing a new generation of leaders for our country and our world.

We are not an institution for the elite. But we are an elite institution in that we believe that with the privilege of a Bishop's education comes the responsibility to contribute to society.

We are committed to equipping students to lead.

In order to do so we must consider – as every generation of educators should – what a modern liberal education should be.

Let me suggest several components of what should characterize a Bishop's education.

I believe that in an increasingly complex and interdependent world, our most effective leaders will be those who not only have a depth of knowledge in a particular field but those who are also able to draw inspiration from a broad spectrum of disciplines.

I believe that all of our students would gain from exposure to each of our faculties.

There are principles of entrepreneurship taught by our Business faculty that would be of benefit to all our students.

Whether a student's ambition is to be the head of the Royal Bank or of a food bank, he or she will need entrepreneurship skills.

There are communication skills taught by our Drama and English departments and there are teaching skills taught by our School of Education that would better equip all our students to be effective leaders.

On a planet facing enormous environmental challenges, a significant measure of scientific literacy will be a pre-requisite for anyone wishing to understand the challenges and choices facing humanity.

In addition to a truly interdisciplinary education, I believe that we must provide our students with meaningful international experiences.

We need to use the University's resources to expose our students to the realities of the world beyond Canada's borders, especially in the developing world where the majority of the world's population lives in conditions of underdevelopment and poverty.

We should build on our involvement with projects in Peru and Tanzania to find focused, structured and sustained ways for our students and our University to make a difference in parts of the world that can benefit from the knowledge and leadership abilities of Bishop's students.

Our students want to make a difference and they rightly expect their University to prepare and assist them in demonstrating their sense of responsibility for the environment and their solidarity with the poor.

In one of the most memorable speeches of my lifetime – Edward Kennedy's eulogy at his brother Robert's funeral – Senator Kennedy quoted George Bernard Shaw to the effect that "some people see things as they are and say why. Others dream things that never were and say why not".

It is the goal of a sound liberal education to equip our students to ask and seek answers to both of those questions.

It is my expectation that, regardless of their field of study, the common characteristics of a Bishop's graduate will include a capacity

- to listen well
- to analyze critically
- to advocate effectively in speech and in writing; and
- to engage with others to effect change

In sum, our students should leave here with a constant inclination to ask why, an unwavering determination to ask why not and the skills to lead constructive and effective change.

Augustin, the great philosopher and theologian, said that:

“Hope has two beautiful daughters
 Their names are anger and courage
 Anger at the way things are
 And courage to see that they do
 not remain as they are.”

I hope that all of our graduates will leave Bishop's with anger at the injustices in our world and the courage to try to eradicate them.

I am confident that our students, faculty, staff and volunteer leaders will join me over the next few months in developing and articulating an ambitious vision for Bishop's.

But no matter how compelling, a vision without resources will be no more than a daydream.

Nous devons continuer - avec nos universités-soeur - à convaincre le gouvernement du Québec d'augmenter le financement des universités, de sorte que nous puissions sortir de notre déficit et réaliser, ainsi, le meilleur investissement pour le futur.

Dans une société basée sur les connaissances dans laquelle notre capacité d'innover sera la clef de notre succès, il ne peut y avoir aucun meilleur investissement que l'enseignement supérieur.

Je crois que le Québec doit réaliser que sa politique de maintien des frais de scolarité à un bas niveau, n'a pas augmenté le nombre d'élèves à s'inscrire, tel qu'espéré.

Les frais de scolarité Québécois devraient être augmentés à la moyenne canadienne et nous devrions investir une partie substantielle de ces augmentations dans des bourses pour les étudiants qui ne peuvent vraiment pas se permettre financièrement d'étudier à l'université.

Tandis que nous pouvons d'une manière justifiable demander au gouvernement d'en faire plus, nous devons également nous assurer que nous concentrons nos efforts sur ce que nous pouvons faire nous-mêmes.

Notre plus grand défi et notre plus grande opportunité sera d'augmenter le nombre d'étudiants à Bishop's.

Over the next five years we must increase our enrolment by 30% from 1730 students to over 2200.

I am confident we can do so because we have a compelling story to tell prospective students.

There are many communities from which we should be able to attract more students. I will mention two.

The first is francophone CEGEP students.

There is a story that the founders of the Bata Shoe Company in Canada used to tell about sending two sales reps off to Africa. The first sales rep wired back: "Limited potential. Most people don't wear shoes". The second rep wrote: "Enormous potential. Most people don't wear shoes".

The analogy is imperfect, but there are six francophone CEGEPS within an hour's drive from Lennoxville, and the vast majority of their students don't consider Bishop's.

Together those CEGEPs have approximately 13,000 students, but this year only 56 of our students come from those six CEGEPs. That is less than half of one percent of their students.

I believe that the opportunity to attend university in English at Bishop's should be highly attractive to many francophone students from the region.

We can and will do a much better job of attracting them to Bishop's.

A second obvious potential constituency is high school students in the Greater Toronto Area.

Unlike most of the rest of Canada, the GTA is projecting an increase in university-aged students.

At the same time, the University of Toronto and some other Ontario institutions have stated that they would like to reduce their undergraduate enrolment.

So Toronto will have more prospective students than places while universities like Bishop's may have more places than prospective students.

We have traditionally drawn a significant percentage of our students from the GTA.

And Premiers Jean Charest and Dalton McGuinty have been expressing the desire to increase mobility between our two provinces.

Bishop's can be both an important contributor and a significant beneficiary in this regard.

And here I wish to issue a clear call to action to all members of this University – alumni, students, faculty and friends.

The Bishop's story has to be told. It has to be heard by prospective students.

The marketing experts tell us that the most powerful promotional campaigns are by word of mouth.

Your mouth and your words are the most effective tools we have to get out the message that Bishop's is the place for young people who want to realize their potential, to learn how to make a difference in this world, to learn to lead. I would like to share an anecdote in this regard.

One of our alumni in the town of Orangeville, north of Toronto, painted his garage door Bishop's purple.

An inquisitive Orangeville high school student asked him why the garage door was painted purple.

The inquisitive young man had never heard of Bishop's.

And today Mark Lawson is the president of our Student Representative Council and an outstanding member of the Bishop's community.

I'm not going to ask all of you to paint your homes purple, but I will ask you to tell our story.

With respect to prospective students, I also believe that we must do more to ensure that the diversity of our student body is a better reflection of the increasingly diverse society that we serve.

And finally, I believe that we need to consider whether or not to provide more programs for graduate students.

We should not abandon our core identity as a primarily undergraduate institution. But developing more graduate programs may allow us to enhance the undergraduate experience while providing support to our professors who wish to intensify their research.

It may also help us improve the financial health of Bishop's.

Our financial situation is fragile. And our margin for error is small. But our capacity for achievement is great.

It will be critical that we focus our talents and efforts on ensuring a long and bright future for Bishop's.

I am confident that we can and will rise to that challenge because of the capacity of this collegial community to focus on the common good.

Aristotle wrote that the danger of a community focused exclusively on the self-interest of individuals was that it would lead to a contest of all against all.

As a balance, even an antidote, to this possibility within a free society, Aristotle held up friendship as the real bond of community, more basic as a political virtue even than justice.

When I was approached about the possibility of coming to Bishop's, the first person I turned to was Norman Webster, a good friend and one of our most distinguished graduates.

Norman is cautious and measured when giving advice, but near the end of our lunch he said: "Michael, Bishop's is a place you can fall in love with".

And after just two months, I can say that for both Fiona and me, he was right.

Our task as people who love this institution is to be proudly, openly and enthusiastically ambitious on its behalf.

Bishop's is a small university which has been – and can continue to be – a great national institution.

This is not a dream.

It is a vision based on 165 years of tradition and accomplishment.

It is a vision based on the conviction that our graduates

- excited by the pursuit of knowledge
 - confident from having tested themselves
 - inspired by their professors, their coaches and by each other; and
 - supported through the blessing of life-long friendships
- will go out from this special place and assume the responsibility and challenge of leadership.

I am truly privileged to have been given the opportunity to help prepare them for that great journey.

Thank you.