

Mr. Chancellor,

Members of the Senate and Board of Regents, distinguished visitors from our various communities, our guest speaker THB Symons and Christine Symons, faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends:

I am honored and humbled to be standing here today to be installed as Mount Allison University's 14th President and Vice-Chancellor.

One cannot help but be a bit apprehensive personally about being 'installed'

..... a curious verb to be sure, given that one typically installs appliances like refrigerators and stoves.

Given my family's incredibly hopeless track record of installing DVD players and computers – or not installing them, to be accurate –

I suspect that I will need the understanding and support of the institution and of the community to be a successful President.

I take on this position with a deep sense of responsibility to the past, the present and the future:

- to those who have done so much in the past to build this great institution – including the Past Presidents and Chancellors and Professors emeriti who have graced us with their presence today
- to this generation's faculty, staff, students, family and community – and taxpayers - who anticipate the experience and delivery of a great and effective education
- And to future generations of students and their families and the community, who deserve the opportunity to access the Mount Allison experience.

I also take on this responsibility with a great amount of joy and enthusiasm.

I have always loved being in the university community, where I have spent most of my adult life.

For reasons that will become clear, I am a deep, intense supporter of higher education – which offers values, opportunity, and mobility to members of society and great benefits to society and to the world.

I pledge that I will carry out my university and presidential responsibilities at Mount Allison and beyond with all of the energy, passion, creativity and intelligence that I can muster.

I HOW DID I GET HERE?

I take on this responsibility with a certain degree of incredulity: how did I manage to find myself in this esteemed position?

Well, let me try to explain.....

FAMILY MATTERS

I was raised in happy and stable family circumstances, the middle child of three.

Alas, my parents are not present but I am happy to note that my siblings – Bryan and Jocelyn and some members of their families– are here today from my home in Montreal.

We were and remain a family that very often argues – indeed, that enjoys arguing.

Indeed, we were 'trained' and encouraged (if not baited) to argue over the family dinner table – the site of our first tutorials and seminars.

But we would all agree that one of our parents' most passionate commitments was to education.

They saw education as a good-in-itself for our personal development.

They also viewed education as an instrument that offered social mobility.

They demonstrated this commitment on many levels, from the personal level of day-to-day life to the strategic level of practical life.

One of my earliest memories – still vivid today – is of a reproduction of Jan Vermeer's *The Lacemaker* in our kitchen.

This was one of numerous art reproductions around the house, one of our mother's many attempts to inject culture into a family household that threatened to be dominated exclusively by Hockey Night in Canada.

Five decades later, my computer's screen saver is Jan Vermeer's *View over Delft* and art is one of my own family's ongoing passions and preoccupations. And I married into a Dutch family – but that may just be a coincidence.

Like many others, our parents struggled daily to make ends meet in the postwar years. Both were from rural families that did not have experience of higher education.

But somehow they managed to send their children to exceptional schools – my sister to Villa Maria and the boys to Loyola College High School.

This classical education sticks to this day, particularly (I fear) in the boys' Jesuitical approach to logic and discipline.

Our parents also helped us to attend university, until scholarships and government assistance kicked in.

This is but a small example of one of the great Canadian stories and partnerships of the postwar period:

- how parents sacrificed to increase social opportunities for their children,

- how democratization of education allowed increased social access to the university experience
- and how the government and its agencies helped to finance the expansion of and access to universities

I believe that this higher education partnership model remains a compelling one that should be followed today.

My family benefited from this, as did the family of my wife Christl Verduyn, who is here today as a member of the Mount Allison faculty.

Her parents were 1950s immigrants from the Netherlands, who more or less re-started their life from scratch in Canada.

They managed to send all of their seven children to university:

I am delighted to welcome Christl's mother Mrs. Stonny Verduyn here today along with Astrid Verduyn and Rod and Kathy Verduyn from Peterborough, Ontario.

Family has been and continues to be central to my life. I am grateful that our four children are here today –

Malcolm (from Glendon College of York University)

Lachlan (from Mount A),

Colin (from Dalhousie),

And Frances (from Tantramar High and the Bridge Street Café, from which she has been given the day off);

So, the family university tradition continues...as is does in so many Canadian households today and as it will continue to do so in the future.

LUCK

A second element in how I became a university President is luck or serendipity.

But as the great Canadian artist and Mount Allison graduate Christopher Pratt put it the other evening in an alumni-sponsored talk:

'When luck knocks at the door you had better be ready to answer it.'

Serendipity in my case took the form of a traveling life insurance salesman.

I must confess that my first experience at university was by no means a glorious success. Indeed, in the Summer of '69, I withdrew from university.

As was the tenor of the times, I felt that I needed an experience or taste of the 'real world'.

So, I went up North to the Manitoba-Ontario border, to work as Canada's least qualified and least able hard-rock miner in a nickel-copper mine in Werner Lake.

After the graveyard shift one late fall morning, I was joined in the meal hall by a young man who looked even more out of place than I did.

He was selling life insurance. Stephen Leacock could not have invented a more ridiculous scene.

In any event, he appealed to my Catholic sense of guilt and I purchased an insurance policy that – in the event of a mine catastrophe – would pay for my funeral arrangements.

This was an excellent salesperson.

After the sale, we chatted about our university experiences. We were both disillusioned, naturally, as this was 1969. He mentioned *en passant* a new university in Ontario that he thought that I might be interested in.

He left...I wrote my brother to check it out...he reported back positively....and - 10 months later - I was attending Trent University.

UNIVERSITY LIFE (1)

For many young people, the university experience transforms their existence.

This was certainly the case for me. I have declared on many occasions that the small university experience made me – as I know that Mount Allison has made many others over the years.

It would be impossible to elaborate here the innumerable ways in which the small liberal arts community at Trent influenced me –

- learning how to speak in public and to argue with commitment in small group tutorials,
- learning how to research and to write fast and well in the perpetual essay assignments
- learning that ideas and passion matter, in contact with the intense and excellent faculty and students of the day
- learning about the wider issues and events of the world in the constant stream of visitors to the university
- learning about the importance of collegiality and collaboration in the university's unique residence and governance environment

But more than anything else, I grew to admire, to respect and eventually to emulate the incredible people who were my mentors..

These included scholars and teachers like Margaret Doxey, David Cameron, Denis Smith and John Burbidge – but especially Trent's founding President – T.H.B. Symons, today's guest speaker.

One cannot understate what Tom Symons attained in those years.

Against all odds, he brought a university to a small, unfashionable, out of the way town in central Ontario and made the university more famous than the Peterborough Petes and more important than General Electric.

But he did not bring just any old university.

He bucked the times.

He created a liberal, residential educational collegiate system based on small group tutorial teaching.

I believed then, and believe to this day, that we were the luckiest students in Canada.

His vision and the concrete practice of the liberal arts and science University have remained with me and animate me to this day.

Tom Symons is as important to my wife as he is to me as an incoming university president.

I suppose that I should mention that I happened to meet my wife at Trent.

Christl was also a Trent student at that time, although we actually met only years later when we both returned as faculty members.

Both my wife and I have subsequently had rich and rewarding careers in Canadian Studies, which – by the way – had its origins here at Mount Allison University.

I should note that all of the music performed today has been chosen for a number of reasons – the primary reason is that it was created by Canadian artists.

I was for many years an editor of the *Journal of Canadian Studies* and Christl was President of the Association of Canadian Studies and received a Governor General's Award for Canadian Studies.

It was Tom Symons who championed the cause of Canadian Universities and Canadian Studies in his landmark study *To Know Ourselves*.

As noted earlier, Tom was given an honorary degree from Mount Allison as well as from Wilfred Laurier University, where Christl and I taught before coming to Mount Allison.

It appears that we will never escape him.

UNIVERSITY LIFE (2)

This early university experience more or less sealed my career fate as an academic.

One day, I was sitting in an International Relations tutorial in Margaret Doxey's office.

She was reading some pre-class announcements, including the time and location of the LSAT (the Law School Admissions Test).

She asked the class which of us it was who was planning to take the test.

I lifted my hand tentatively, but had it slapped down peremptorily by my professor:

"Don't be silly, Campbell", she berated, "you are going to be an academic not a lawyer."

And that was that.....

I subsequently had wonderful experiences at Toronto, the London School of Economics, McGill, Trent again, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

Throughout these experiences, I came to believe that I had a trio of responsibilities – equal in importance and value –

Teaching, research, and service.

Allow me to say a few words about each.

Our primary responsibility in university is to create and distribute knowledge and insight for society. This has been and continues to be a bedrock of civilization, an uninterrupted social responsibility since the Reformation.

One of the ways in which we pursue this responsibility is through teaching students. We pass on knowledge and values to them and we teach them the techniques that will lead the next generation to produce new knowledge and understanding for society.

The University brings scholar-teachers and students together in a community and magic happens. But this is a complex and challenging community, which cannot exist or reproduce itself automatically. The University is primarily a self-governing institution – but it needs academic leaders to guarantee and to improve its existence.

What I learned from Trent, and from Toronto, and from Laurier and from the LSE – was that all three ingredients matter – they matter deeply and they matter equally.

We must do good teaching as we do research, or else research may not have a future. And we must ensure good academic leadership and governance, or else the university may not have a future as we understand and cherish it.

I have always felt deep responsibility to this trio of ingredients. I have worked hard to be a good teacher, a productive researcher, and a useful and effective academic administrator.

It is for this reason that I have been willing, indeed anxious, to take on the role of academic administrator – as Department Chair, as Faculty Dean, as Provost, and now as President.

II WHERE AM I GOING?

A year ago, we were living in the Netherlands and I was commuting to a series of interviews in Canada for this position.

In a teleconference interview between Den Haag and Ottawa, the Alumni Representative on the committee – Catherine Decarie – asked why I wanted to be President of Mount Allison University.

Whether it was the technological distance from Ottawa – or the calming influence of the pre-interview Heineken – I answered:

"I think that I was made to be President of Mount Allison University."

Members of the Mount Allison community will know that we are presently undergoing the construction of a strategy plan for the next decade.

In a *Green Paper* discussion briefing, my administrative colleagues and I have asked the community to review and re-evaluate what we characterize as the eight core ingredients of the university mission statement.

I see myself directly and deeply engaged in each of these ingredients.

Over the next years, I hope to pursue and attain these ingredients through leadership, collaboration, intelligence, passion, creativity and a little bit of luck.

FIRST: I want Mount Allison to be a place where we are passionately and energetically engaged in teaching, creativity and research.

It is our job to create, interpret, and disseminate knowledge and to pursue the scholarship of teaching and learning, through professional and community activities and teaching.

SECOND: I am committed to the importance of undergraduate education. This is something that differentiates us from the diverse community of Canadian universities.

We want to do undergraduate teaching and we want to do it well. I want us to focus on the individual student, each and every one of whom matters to us. This requires – this demands – that students should be foregrounded in everything that we do.

THIRD: I believe in the value and importance of broad-based, comprehensive liberal arts and science education and the creative arts. This again differentiates us from other universities.

I think that it is our primary duty to teach students:

- to think, to read, to write, to create, and to argue well
- to be critical and analytical and insightful
- to know about the world and its possibilities
- to have access to comprehending most features of it
- to have tools and possibilities for intervening in and shaping that world

FOURTH: We are a humane and intimate place. We are a small university, in a small town, and I think that this matters to a positive effect. This also differentiates us in the Canadian university system.

Our scale allows us to know our students as individuals and to take a caring, personal approach to their education and development.

FIFTH: we are a residential university. This matters and this again differentiates us from other universities.

We live in a small town – Sackville – and we love and value being here. It is a community that parallels our intimate university community.

This allows – indeed encourages – community building in a kind of laboratory setting. It also allows us to pursue and organize education, integrating academic life and programming with student and community life and activities.

SIXTH: At the core of our purpose, I want us to aim to make our students the best or fullest that they can be. Our founder Charles Allison's dictum was that we aim to develop the 'whole person'.

In our intimate, residential, community setting, in our liberal arts and science pedagogy and programming, and in focusing on the individual –

I believe that we should aim to help students in their intellectual, social, cultural, physical, spiritual, and political development.

SEVENTH: The Mount Allison community should be one in which we bring the world to Sackville and we present Sackville to the world.

We are in the Maritimes and we value that. And as a maritime area, we look outward to the world.

I think that we must value and learn from our local roots, from our being Maritimers and Canadians, and from being citizens of the world.

I believe that our community should reflect our local, national and international ambitions.

EIGHTH: I believe that we are a community of communities: students, staff, faculty, alumni, friends, public institutions. We need all of these communities to be involved and to partner with each other, if we are to attain our mission and goals.

I want all members of our community to understand this shared mission. And I want us to pursue that mission together. We will work hard to operationalize collegial and governance arrangements that reflect our values and our shared responsibilities and aspirations.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chancellor, guests, and members of the Mount Allison community:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the immediate Mount Allison community – including the Presidential Search Committee - for putting its trust and its faith in me as President and Vice-Chancellor.

I would also like to thank our broader 'community of communities' – governments, families, friends, supporters, alumni, and partners – for their ongoing support of Mount Allison University.

We appreciate your support very much, and we want to continue to partner and to do great things with you in the future.

I want to thank the present Mount Allison cohort of fantastic staff, faculty and students.

I want you to know that I appreciate the stimulation and support that you have provided to me.

I look forward to working with you to make Mount Allison the best small undergraduate university in Canada and amongst the best in North America.

I also want to offer heartfelt appreciation to the many, many people who have helped to organize and deliver the Installation event:

- particularly my fantastic team in the President's Office
- the good folks at Aramark
- the Faculty of Music and its performers today
- the Communications Office
- and to all participants in today's event.

Thank you also to family, to friends, and to visitors, particularly those who have traveled from a distance and who have brought greetings and good wishes from other institutions.

Friends and colleagues:

The University is a wonderful institution, comprised of a community of intelligent, active, committed and creative people, who build on enduring traditions and values to create new knowledge, values and understanding for society.

It really is a privilege and a joy to work in such an environment.

And today, I think that the greatest privilege and joy is mine, to become Mount Allison's 14th President and Vice-Chancellor.

I promise to pursue the values and vision that I learned from my family, from my education, from my mentors like Tom Symons, and from the mission and heritage of Mount Allison University.

Thank you.