# Convocation 2015: June 5, 2015 Afternoon Ceremony part 1

[BAGPIPES PLAYING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DON TAPSCOTT: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated. I'm Don Tapscott. I'm the chancellor of Trent University and I'm a proud graduate too.

[CHEERS]

Thank you. And I guess I've had more than my share of honors over the years, but no honor greater than being the first alumni chancellor of this fabulous institution. I'm one of--

[INAUDIBLE]

Thank you. This is somebody's mom. I'm one of four Tapscott boys, actually, who graduated from Trent, two years apart-- and that was a while ago. And I'm just delighted to be here.

This is the eighth and final convocation of this season. And I would like to begin by thanking Mother Nature, because every one of these convocations has been held in what, from my experience, is probably the most spectacular venue to convocate on the planet. So could we bring it on for Mother Nature please?

[CHEERING]

And with the graduates in nursing today, we are saving the best for last. Now--

[CHEERING]

I don't speak disparagingly of the other classes. I'm thinking more in terms of, I've heard that nursing is a very vociferous and ebullient group. And you should feel fully free to bring it on throughout this entire ceremony. Try it-- go for it right now.

[CHEERING]

Yes. All right, thank you. Students graduating this week, all of them of course, are sharing a very special milestone. And this convocation today marks the official end of our 50th anniversary year. It's been a great year, and celebrating your graduation is the perfect way to wrap it up.

For 50 years, Trent has been challenging the way that we think around the world, and also challenging learning itself. And today, more than ever, Trent graduates are in demand. Now, I know being in demand has not exactly been a big worry for this class, because all of you will find employment directly related to your field of studies. And so in that sense, you chose well.

But you'll be surprised to know that all of your other colleagues at Trent, and various liberal arts and science degrees, will also find employment related to what they do. And the idea of the university graduate, five years out working at McDonald's, is actually a myth. And in fact, the Canadian Council of Universities just released a big report that dispelled this myth and showed how there's very high employability levels of university graduates. They also pointed out that Ontario University graduates, over their lifetime, have made $1.1 million-- that's $1.1 million-- more than people without a university degree. So you chose well and you will be successful.

I know firsthand, because it worked for me, that as a Trent grad, you're going to be uniquely equipped and prepared for the exciting and challenging future that lies ahead. And nursing, of course, is going through all kinds of very profound changes-- demographic demands. We've got exciting new technologies that are emerging. There are important breakthroughs in science everywhere, and also in the practice of providing medical attention.

As we move from an old industrial model where I'm a clinician and I have knowledge and you're a patient, and you don't. I give it to you and you're passive, or we can start to actually engage not just patients when they're in the system, but engage citizens. And where we can create an environment where people understand the importance of wellness and where they can collaborate because, of course, isolation is the number one risk factor in health.

So this is the time a great opportunity in your profession. And with your Trent experience, you have the tools, you have the know-how, and you also have the deeper capacity for thinking critically-- a passion for learning-- and you will have to learn lifelong in this profession. You will reinvent your knowledge base multiple times throughout your life. And you have the tools to take full advantage of those opportunities in front of you.

So this is your moment. It's a time to imagine. It's a time to think about designing a life that will achieve not just prosperity, and you will be prosperous. And by all means do that. As Spock said, "Live long and prosper," but to also live a purposeful life. You've already chosen a field because a deep sense of integrity and principles that you have. And you have an opportunity to live a life that's principled, but it's also enormously consequential and that's uniquely your own.

So heartfelt congratulations to each of you on reaching this important milestone and I now declare the convocation open.

[APPLAUSE]

LEO GROARKE: Good afternoon. My name is Leo Groarke. I'm the president vice chancellor of Trent University, and it's my honor to welcome you here today. Before I do that, I did want to say that I think this is a very special convocation. Partly, as the chancellor has noted, it's the last of eight convocations that Trent is holding this week. It's also very special because it's our nursing convocation.

[CHEERING]

I would say as someone that's responsible for organizing these things that this is the one convocation where we don't worry about medical emergencies. The only question is if somebody stumbles or gets hurt, do you want to get help from a nurse has already received their degree, or one that's waiting to receive their degree? It really is a pleasure to welcome everybody here today. Special welcome to families and friends, people come from across Canada, and international visitors who've come to join us.

I do want to say something in a moment about internationalization at Trent University, but at this point, I do want to say a special welcome to international visitors. And I will say that if you are coming internationally, or if you're coming from another part of Canada, I hope you'll take a little time to explore the campus. This is a beautiful campus. It's 1,500 acres of woods and river.

On that side on the east side of the river are nature trails. I encourage you to try. If you're adventurous, you should take a canoe. We have lots of canoes here. And sorry we're going to get tired of the nursing jokes, but if you fall in the water, well there'll be somebody there to help you, there's nothing to be worried about. I want to give a special shout out as well to people who are watching this ceremony. This ceremony's being broadcast around the world on the worldwide web.

And at the start of this ceremony, on behalf of the university, I do want to acknowledge that we are located in the traditional territory of the Mississauga Anishinaabe, adjacent to the Haudenosaunee territory in eastern Ontario. Especially in a week, when Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has presented its findings on the regrettable history of the residential school system, it is important to honor and recognize the traditional occupants of this land. And I would say that's very much a Trent thing to do.

[APPLAUSE]

I want to say a couple of things about convocation and what the purpose of convocation is and, in a certain way, assign us all our particular roles. I would say that the convocation is about our graduates. This is our moment to celebrate and recognize and cheer on the graduates. For the graduates, I very sincerely want to ask you to enjoy the day. Soak it in. We all have good days and bad days and occasionally special days. I want this to be a very special day for you. Probably at one point in our lives, we all want to be movie stars. Today's one of those days where you can imagine you're movie star and kind of fulfill that fantasy.

I would also say that that's their role. Our role up here, sort of to say a few words of wisdom and to keep things running on time. Your role out there is to be the paparazzi. OK? And I want you not to be shy. Convocation is a medieval ceremony-- that's why we've got all these wonderful robes. And I will tell you, in medieval times, ceremonies were not quiet, dignified, stodgy events. That's just not the way they were. And please don't be shy. Get up here take the photos. Give a big loud cheer when your son or daughter or friend comes across podium.

I do want to say that in celebrating our students' successes, we also celebrate the successes of the families and the friends who made those successes possible. So in that way we're celebrating you as well. Just a couple words about Trent University.

As a president, I have to say I have a captive audience here, so I can't let you leave without saying a few things about Trent. And I want to give you a bit of the spirit of what Trent's about. And I thought I would do that in two ways. The first is-- I've been talking to visitors to Trent this week, during all the convocations.

And I want to share with you all the countries who have sons and daughters and family at Trent. Canada, of course, and because I'm from Alberta I always throw in Alberta. And believe me, in Alberta we think it's a different country, so it fits in there. The United States, Uganda, Australia, Ireland, Ecuador, Vietnam, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Bahamas, Pakistan, Palestine, the Mauritius, Brazil, Zimbabwe, the Ukraine, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Colombia, Turkey, Japan. Could I have a round of applause for the diversity at Trent University?

[APPLAUSE]

I have another list. And maybe with this ceremony it would be easy, but it's not always easy to tell what students are going to do after they graduate. So I've been conducting an informal survey. As an educator, I have to say this isn't scientifically done. It's not a random survey. But asking students-- and I want to share with you what some of our students are planning to do with their lives.

You know what I'll say? The first answer is "be a nurse," because that went first.

Social work. Teacher's college. I'm going to be a graduate student and do a Master of Economics in Australia. Business analyst. A naturopath. Writer. Graduate student at the University of Toronto. And environmental scientist. Someone who does environmental modeling. Entrepreneur. An apprentice with Justin Chu in Hong Kong. Someone who works to address human trafficking. Will find a job in the pharmaceutical industry. Going to law school. Already have a job on Bay Street. A journalist. Have a job with the United Nations. Will get a job at Trent University. Going to travel around the world for a while. And my favorite, because I think she was so honest-- I don't know what I'm going to do. I will go back and live with Mum and Dad for a few years.

And, by the way, that was not a student at this convocation, so you can all relax, Mum and Dad.

One last comment. I did want to welcome our students and to remind them that they do not leave the Trent family when this convocation is over. They just join another component of that family-- that's our alumni family. That alumni family is 44,000 and growing, of course. It's made up of people from all around the world. And you, as you will find, will find Trent graduates everywhere. I hope you keep in touch. And we are always interested in what you're doing.

On that note, let me note that, as the chancellor has mentioned, this is the end of our 50th anniversary at Trent University. We're an established 50-year-old institution now. I want to remind our graduates that there's another anniversary coming up. In 50 years, Trent will be 100 years old. So I'm telling you that I have an expectation that 50 years from now, you'll come back to the podium where you are graduating to celebrate Trent's 100th anniversary. I probably won't be there, OK? But maybe you can fondly remember this day.

Now, Mr. Chancellor, I want to call on Professor Joan Sangster to introduce a remarkable individual we will recognize with an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Thank you very much.

JOAN SANGSTER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chancellor.

Those who advocate for child care in Canada know that the struggle for better and more accessible child care is an uphill battle, a never-ending story. Yet, over the last four decades advances have been made, largely because of the dedicated commitment of academic researchers and activist leaders like Martha Friendly.

Martha Friendly is Canada's leading child care advocate, a highly respected researcher, and a major architect of policy thinking on child care issues. For more than 40 years, she has spearheaded research projects and advocacy campaigns at the local, provincial, and national levels, all of which have contributed to the fight for universal, high-quality, accessible, and inclusive early childhood education. In many ways, Martha Friendly is the face of Canadian child care. She has consistently advanced both a policy and research agenda, striving to provide policy makers and the public with the most up-to-date, innovative research on early childhood education, and advocating for improvements to our current patchwork, inadequate system of care. She has also founded and participated in a number of influential child care advocacy groups, including the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

Martha Friendly received a degree in Psychology and studied Social Psychology at the graduate level at the University of Connecticut, after which she worked as a researcher studying the Head Start program in the United States. Following her move to Canada, she worked on child care research at the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, and later became the research coordinator at the University of Toronto's Child in the City program at the Center for Urban & Community Studies.

Martha Friendly was the founder and executive director of the Child Care Resource and Research Unit, which is Canada's only policy research institute for early childhood education and care. Under her direction, the Research Unit has produced dozens of research papers, briefing notes, and other analyses of early childhood education that have advanced the child care agenda across the country. Their series "Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada" provides comprehensive overviews of early childhood education services, policies, regulations, and training at the national and provincial levels. It is a crucial source of data that no other institute provides. Martha is also an accomplished researcher and author; she has published extensively on early childhood education in a variety of academic and policy venues, including Canadian and international journals, and she has contributed to countless books on topics of children, education, and social policy.

Martha Friendly has been one of the driving forces behind ChildCare 2020, a national child care conference that brings together advocates, parents, child care workers, politicians, policymakers, and researchers, to spark discussion and action on child care. She has dedicated herself to an ideal which is still far from achieved, but her contributions to the dialogue about early childhood education have advanced the debate in Canada, putting child care on the political map. This honorary degree marks Martha Friendly's contributions to the ongoing struggle both for better child care and women's equality. It also reflects Trent's commitment to social justice, to Educational Studies, and to our own historical leadership in creating an ideal space for child care on campus, the Trend Child Care Center.

The goal of child care, in Martha's view, is to provide children with an enriched, safe, and stimulating early childhood experience, and to provide working women and families with the means to economic equality and stability. The progress we have made towards these goals owes much to her work, dedication, and tenacity. Graduates, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chancellor, please join me in honoring Martha Friendly.

[APPLAUSE]

LEO GROARKE: Congratulations, Dr. Friendly. It's now my privilege to ask you to address Convocation.

[APPLAUSE]

MARTHA FRIENDLY: Well, this is splendid, actually. I want to start by saying how fantastic it is that the weather has held, because I wanted to say how happy I am to be here with you on a beautiful June day when I don't have to wear a down coat anymore. And when it was raining, I thought I was going to have to remove that line.

Honored guests, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, university faculty, members of the graduating class, families and friends. And here I would like to particularly acknowledge amongst the faculty the Gender and Women's Studies Department, who nominated me for this award. So thank you very much, sisters.

I'm thrilled and most honoured to receive Trent University's honorary Doctor of Laws degree today. The University's recognition that research and activism on child care are worthy of this honor is tremendously meaningful not only for me but also for my dedicated colleagues across Canada. I'm appreciative both for myself and for the early childhood education and care field, the folks across Canada from Newfoundland to BC with whom I've worked for so many years.

Of course, a convocation is first and foremost about the graduates. And it's an exceptional pleasure to have this opportunity to say "bravo" to all of you. Gaining a post-secondary degree is a noteworthy accomplishment, and one to be celebrated, as President Groarke said-- and probably one of the key benchmarks in your life so far.

I'm especially pleased to have been asked to speak to the 2015 Nursing graduates this afternoon. You know, nursing is a profession that-- like early childhood education, which looks to the nursing profession as a model-- it's historically been a women's specialty. And here I want to apologize to the young men in the graduating class, which is a great sign about what I want to say next about recognition.

As a longtime feminist, I'm very aware of how far nursing has come in gaining recognition as a caring profession that requires extensive knowledge and significant scale. And it has achieved the acknowledgement that it's truly at the heart of health care. That wasn't true when I was younger, and that's been an achievement over my lifetime.

Now, I don't doubt that you're elated to be done with the hard work-- the assignments, the labs and the marks. And I also don't doubt that you're tremendously proud now that this has all been distilled into one hard-earned piece of paper with your name on it. Although you are graduating into what's generally a dismal job market for many equally hard-working arts and humanities graduates, you do have the distinct advantage of being in an employable field, with numerous prospects for fulfilling important work over your working lifetime.

And I wanted to say, also, congratulations and well done to the families and other guests of the graduates, and to commend you for your enduring financial and moral support to your kids. I've sat in your seat several times, and I know that whether this is your first child to graduate or your fourth, you feel tremendous pride, probably relief, nostalgia, and probably are kind of stunned and sad about how quickly time has passed. And if you're like me, you're probably also pretty hopeful that your graduate may someday soon move some of her or his belongings out of your house-- out of your basement, your attic, your garage or closets to a place of their own.

You may know, you may not know, but everyone who's asked to give a convocation speech, even those who are frequent public speakers, agonize over what to say. And I have to say that I really racked my brain thinking about what to say to you today. And I wanted to keep it short, so I will. In browsing the internet to look at what other people had to say, I noticed that one of the most frequent bits of advice given at convocations is "phone your parents." And this is probably coming from speakers whose kids don't get in touch very often.

I've also found that some of the advice for life that convocation speeches include is pretty unfathomable. It includes such things as, be sure to make your bed every day. And one of the most common things I think is, well, we didn't have the internet, Bluetooth, social media, or personal electronic devices when I was young. So I decided to take one colleague's advice that seemed to me to make sense, which was, about all a convocation speaker can really do is to suggest a few things that she or he believes really matter.

And to put this in context, I want to tell you the little story about myself, how I came to be where I am, and then, leave you with a very few things that I've learned in doing all of this. And I hope that this may be useful in some way. Well, here's my little story. I, like so many Canadians, came to Canada, to Toronto, as an immigrant. And in a way, this makes being honored for the work I've done on Canadian social policy especially meaningful to me.

I immigrated as a young adult in 1971. I grew up in a New York suburban neighborhood where no one was black, disabled, Muslim, or gay. No one spoke a language other than English. Everyone was middle class. And women only worked outside the home until they got married in their early 20s. And then, they almost always stayed home until their 2.3 kids were at school all day. This was the 1950s.

And following a frivolous and unfocused youth as a prom-queen-type popular girl, rather than a diligent student, I graduated from university right into what later became loosely called the '60s. And this was a pretty significant time. You may have heard this. It was characterized not only by sex, drugs, and rock and roll, but also by far reaching social movements, which were very nearly, down right revolutions in some places.

Now, in the early 1960s, the first social movement that I came in contact with was the United States Civil Rights Movement. And for Americans at that time, if you can think back to this, the homegrown Civil Rights Movement was either threatening or inspiring, depending upon who you were. And for me, the civil rights struggles were inspiring and instructive. And this is really when I started paying attention to the news.

Then, by the time I went to graduate school, in the mid-1960s, the United States was heavily involved in the Vietnam War. And just about everyone I knew was engaged in anti-war activities of all kinds, personal and collective. In fact, we took the idea that the personal is political, an idea that came out of the women's movement, quite literally and tried to live it.

A very significant part of the picture for many women was what we at that time called women's liberation. The women's movement of the 1960s and the 1970s, what's now called second-wave feminism, was of course neither the beginning of women's demands for gender equality, nor was women's equality, as we can clearly see in Canada today, completed at that time. It's still a very incomplete equality in Canada, as it is other countries.

And just to kind of summarize this, overall, what I gained from my formal education was some research skills and some basic knowledge that put me in a position to be employed. But it was what I gained from the social movements, especially the women's movement back in the early days and later on after I came to Canada, that formed my thinking about what I wanted to do in the long term. Over the years, it was learning outside the classroom using, however, skills that I gained in the classroom that helped form my ideas about how the world works and I think, most importantly, about how it should work.

And just to finish up the little story, I think maybe Joan Sangster already told the little story. I ended up gaining an understanding of the importance of public policy for everybody, for children, women, and families. And I learned how to link research and advocacy to policy as I developed the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the University of Toronto.

And it did come to play a leading role in child care in early childhood education policy research. And it did have the support of federal funding from the federal government until after the 2006 federal election, when all the funding to childcare activities was cut, along with the national childcare program that governments had begun working on. That Childcare Resource and Research Unit continues today as a small, independent, nonprofit organization. And it continues to provide an independent voice for progressive public policy for children and families.

So just to tie all these thoughts together, I want to end with six points or understandings that are in the nature of the life lessons that I know a convocation speech should put forward. And these do come out of my own experiences. And they summarize some of what I think can make a difference in how happy, healthy, and fulfilled one's life is.

I think one of the first things that I learned was that learning really is lifelong. There are always new, interesting, and useful things to learn. Although, some would say that the trouble with this is that you never really graduate.

The second thing I think that is maybe useful to think about is it's really useful to learn how to connect the dots because, when you join up ideas or perceptions, it leads to new ways of looking at things. And it can be a lot more than the sum of the parts.

I also want to make the point that it's really good to come to understand that a lot of things aren't about you. In fact, thinking about how you can make a difference in your community, in your work, and in society is often the most satisfying kind of thing that you can do. And if you can, find work you really want to do and people you like to do it with. It makes it a lot more fun.

And another thing that I have thought about a lot is that you never really know where you're going to end up. It's very hard to predict it. In fact, it could be almost anywhere. And actually, this makes things a lot more interesting.

And finally, I can't say this strongly enough. It's really important to fight what you believe in. It's really important to fight for what you believe in. And don't give into bullies. And the last thing I want to say is do phone home fairly often. Your parents will appreciate it.

So thank you, Trent University faculty, students. And I want to thank you for the tremendous honor you've bestowed upon me. And thank you, 2015 nursing graduates, for letting me share your convocation. Thanks a lot.

[APPLAUSE]

LEO GROARKE: Thank you so much for those words, Dr. Friendly. Soon we're going to proceed to the presenting of degrees. But we have arranged something special today. We're honoring Dr. Friendly because she has been one of the leading advocates of children in Canada. We all know that our future belongs to children. So we have something special that we want to present to you. So I'm going to ask Moira Vance of the Trent Childcare Center to come forward and say a few words.

[APPLAUSE]

MOIRA VANCE: I would like to introduce to you our preschool room from Trent Childcare. We are thrilled to be part of this celebration, as Martha Friendly receives her honorary degree from Trent University. We are here to thank Martha for being a strong voice, an advocate, and a passionate leader for childcare for many years.

Martha promotes a vision of quality early childhood education as a right for every child. It is leaders like Martha that will make this vision of a publicly funded, nonprofit, quality childcare system assessable to every child and parent a reality. On behalf of the childcare community, I'd like to thank Martha for her dedication and commitment for many years.

We have brought our preschool room here today to sing a song for you that they'll be singing at their own graduation in two weeks. This will be their first graduation of many that they'll experience in their lives. They're about to sing for you "Make New Friends."

ALL: [SINGING] Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, and the other's gold. A circle's round. It has no end. That's how long I want to be your friend. That's how long I want to be your friend.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

ALL: One, two, three. [SINGING] Make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver, and the other's gold. A circle's round. It has no end. That's how long I want to be your friend. That's how long I want to be your friend.

[APPLAUSE]

[SIDE CONVERSATION]

LEO GROARKE: I'm sorry, graduates, but that's going to be tough to beat.

[LAUGHTER]

But we're going to try. Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to proceed to the presenting of degrees. Just so you know what's going on, the graduates will be at my right side here. They'll begin at the end. Dean Kirsten Woodend of the School of Nursing will announce their names. They will come across to the middle here, where they will meet the chancellor. Graduates, that is your moment of fame. OK?

There will be photos taken here. Please take lots of photos, make lots of noise. Then, you will keep going right to the end here. I'll be here. The university registrar, our official records keeper will be here, as will various staff and faculty from the university. So Dean Woodend, I invite you to begin the presenting of candidates for degree.

KIRSTEN WOODEND: Thank you. Mr. Chancellor, Carol Kelsey, Dean of the School of Community Development and Health at Fleming College, will join me in presenting the candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Mr. Chancellor, we are pleased to present, for the degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing, candidates whose names will be read whom the Senate has duly declared worthy of the honor that they may receive the degree at your hands.

[READING NAMES]