

**FACULTY OF ENGINEERING  
50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GALA  
Saturday, October 18, 2008**

**REMARKS FOR PETER GEORGE  
President & Vice-Chancellor, McMaster University**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

GOOD EVENING.

THANK YOU DAVID.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WELCOME HOME. WELCOME HOME TO MCMASTER UNIVERSITY.

ENGINEERING ALUMNI, FACULTY, STAFF AND FRIENDS, I AM DELIGHTED THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO JOIN US FOR HOMECOMING WEEKEND. AND I AM DELIGHTED THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE OCCASION OF THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY.

HOMECOMING WEEKEND IS ALWAYS A VERY BUSY TIME AT THE UNIVERSITY. BUT IT IS ALWAYS A WELCOME AND HAPPY OCCASSION IN WHICH TO PARTICIPATE. TO SEE STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF REUNITED, OFTEN AFTER NOT HAVING SEEN EACH OTHER FOR DECADES, REAFFIRMS ONE OF THE VITAL ROLES OF THE UNIVERSITY. THAT ROLE IS ONE OF FORMING BONDS, OF SHARING EXPERIENCES, OF PURSUING COMMON GOALS, AND OF HELPING EACH OTHER DEVELOP TO OUR FULL POTENTIAL, AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A COMMUNITY.

OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS, THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING HAS PLAYED A VITAL ROLL IN HELPING MCMASTER UNIVERSITY DEVELOP ITS POTENTIAL. THE FACULTY'S CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE HELPED THE UNIVERSITY BECOME KNOWN AS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

THAT ACHIEVEMENT IS A DIRECT RESULT OF EVERYONE HERE TONIGHT:

IT IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OUR ENGINEERING ALUMNI, WHILE STUDENTS AND NOW IN YOUR CAREERS. YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A STRONG AND FAVOURABLE REPUTATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

IT IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ENGINEERING FACULTY MEMBERS. IT IS THROUGH YOUR DESIRE TO LEARN, TO DISCOVER AND TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE THAT LINKS ARE FORMED WITH OTHERS, HERE AT MCMASTER AND, ULTIMATELY, AROUND THE WORLD.

AND, MCMASTER'S FAVOURABLE REPUTATION IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR STAFF. IT IS THEIR WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO ENSURE THAT EVERY ASPECT OF THE UNIVERSITY FUNCTIONS AT ITS BEST THAT THE UNIVERSITY IS ABLE TO SUCCEED.

OVER THE YEARS, IT HAS BEEN AN HONOUR TO BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MANY OF YOU HERE TONIGHT THROUGH THE PRESENTATION OF VARIOUS AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS.

I HOPE THAT OVER THE COURSE OF HOMECOMING WEEKEND, YOU ARE ABLE TO WALK AROUND CAMPUS AND SEE THE RESULTS OF THESE CONTRIBUTIONS. YOU WILL SEE THAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS GROWN IN SIZE. YOU WILL SEE NEW BUILDINGS AND, WITHIN THOSE BUILDINGS, NEW TOOLS FOR LEARNING.

WHAT YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SEE, BUT WHAT YOU WILL SENSE, IS ALSO THE UNIVERSITY'S GROWTH IN STATURE.

YOU WILL SEE THAT WE STILL HAVE ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. WE ARE NESTLED IN ONE OF THE MOST ECOLOGICALLY DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTS IN THE WORLD. WE ARE BORDERED BY ONE OF THE GREAT LAKES, THE ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS AND THE SPLENDOR OF THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE GROWN TIRED OF THE WILDLIFE OF LIVING IN A BIG CITY, YOU ARE WELCOME TO ENJOY OUR NATURAL WILDLIFE HERE ON CAMPUS.

YOU'LL ALSO NOTICE, AS YOU WALK AROUND CAMPUS, THAT THE LIFESTYLE AND FASHION OF TODAY'S STUDENTS HAVE CHANGED.

ONE ALMOST UNIVERSAL FEATURE OF TODAY'S STUDENT THAT YOU WOULD NOT HAVE RECOGNIZED BACK IN 1958 ARE THE WIRES THAT SPROUT FROM STUDENT EARS. THAT OF COURSE IS FOR LISTENING TO LECTURES THAT THEY HAVE ENJOYED SO MUCH.

TECHNOLOGY HAS CERTAINLY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MCMASTER CAMPUS. WE HAVE INVESTED IN VERY SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER SYSTEMS. WE HOUSE MANY OF THE COMPUTERS THAT FORM SHARCNET, ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL COMPUTER SYSTEMS IN THE COUNTRY THAT WE SHARE WITH SEVERAL OTHER UNIVERSITIES.

WIRELESS HAS TAKEN ROOT. FACULTY ARE TEACHING COURSES ONLINE AND SOME LECTURES ACTUALLY ARE AVAILABLE AS PODCASTS.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION HAS CHANGED TOO. GREATER CONSIDERATION IS NOW GIVEN TO SUSTAINABLE BUILDING. NEW MATERIALS, BUILDING METHODS AND CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT ARE MORE EFFICIENT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY. THE NEW ENGINEERING BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION IS ONE EXAMPLE OF THAT.

WE HAVE ENGINEERS TO THANK FOR ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS. WE HAVE YOU HERE TONIGHT TO THANK.

NOW, I'M SURE WE ALSO HAVE MORE THAN A FEW OF YOU HERE TO THANK FOR SOME OF THE KIPLING PRANKS THAT TOOK PLACE OVER THE YEARS. I WILL TELL YOU THAT SOME OF THEM CAUSED ME A FEW DAYS OF GRIEF. BUT PERHAPS TONIGHT IT IS OK FOR ME TO ADMIT THAT A FEW OF THEM WERE ALSO QUITE CLEVER.

HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO GET A CAR ON THE ROOF OF UNIVERSITY HALL REMAINS A MYSTERY. PERHAPS IT IS BEST THAT IT REMAINS THAT WAY.

THERE WERE SOME MORE THOUGHTFUL KIPLING CONTRIBUTIONS AS WELL. THE CLOCKS IN THE STUDENT CENTRE AND IN FRONT OF THE JOHN HODGINS BUILDING ARE TWO EXAMPLES.

THERE ARE A FEW OTHER THINGS THAT WE CAN COUNT ON ENGINEERING STUDENTS FOR. A WARM AND CARING GREETING DURING WELCOME WEEK AND A ROUSING ROUND OF ENGINEERING CAROLS DURING SANTA HOG.

SO, IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE, AND SOME RELIEF, TO SEE THAT SO MANY OF YOU HAVE GONE ON TO RECORD MANY GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE YEARS, BOTH PERSONALLY AND FOR THE BETTERMENT OF SOCIETY.

THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING HAS ALSO MADE MANY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OVER THE YEARS TO MCMASTER, AND TO SOCIETY AT LARGE.

IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION, THE ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM STARTED IN 1971 REMAINS AS POPULAR AS EVER TODAY. IT HAS SINCE BEEN COPIED BY MANY OTHER UNIVERSITIES.

AND THE ENGINEERING AND SOCIETY PROGRAM, STARTED IN 1992, REMAINS AHEAD OF ITS TIME. IT TOOK THE REST OF THE WORLD SOME 25 YEARS LONGER TO REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY.

MORE RECENTLY, ENGINEERING HAS WORKED WITH MOHAWK COLLEGE TO INTRODUCE THE BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM. IT PROVIDES STUDENTS WITH THE OPTION OF HOLDING BOTH A UNIVERSITY DEGREE AND COLLEGE DIPLOMA UPON GRADUATION.

ENGINEERING GRADUATE PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO EXPAND. THERE ARE NEW MASTER'S AND PhD OPTIONS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF TODAY'S PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER. THERE ARE ALSO TRADITIONAL MASTER'S AND PhD PROGRAMS TO HELP KEEP THE RANKS OF OUR FACULTY MEMBERS AND RESEARCH SPECIALISTS FULL.

THERE ARE ALSO THE RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS, TOO MANY OF WHICH TO MENTION THIS EVENING. BUT IT IS WORTH POINTING OUT THAT TWO ENGINEERING FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN AWARDED THE ORDER OF CANADA ... DR. LES SHEMILT AND DR. DOUGLAS BARBER. ANOTHER 14 HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED AS FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA AND 11 AS FELLOWS OF THE CANADIAN ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING.

THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING HITS ABOVE ITS WEIGHT WITH 14 CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS. AND THROUGH THE VERY GENEROUS DONATIONS OF MANY OF OUR ENGINEERING ALUMNI, SOME OF WHOM ARE ABLE TO BE WITH US TONIGHT, ENGINEERING BOASTS 10 ENDOWED CHAIRS.

WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING TO RAISE FUNDS FOR NEW ENDOWED CHAIRS IN ENGINEERING. THESE ARE TO ENABLE FACULTY TO PURSUE SOME OF THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING, SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS, AND IN NANOTECHNOLOGY. WE ARE ALSO WORKING TO RAISE

FUNDS FOR NEW STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS AS WELL AS FOR THE NEW ENGINEERING BUILDING.

THESE INITIATIVES WILL HELP ENSURE OUR FACULTY CAN CONTINUE TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES IN TEACHING AND IN RESEARCH, AND TO PROPERLY EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENGINEERS.

TONIGHT'S CELEBRATION PROVIDES US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK BACK AND REMINISCE. IT PROVIDES US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLAUD EACH OTHERS ACCOMPLISHMENTS. AND, IT PROVIDES US WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK FORWARD AT HOW WE WANT THE FUTURE TO UNFOLD. THAT IS WHY MARKING THE OCCASION OF THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AT MCMASTER IS SUCH AN AUSPICIOUS OCCASION.

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR EVENING.

THANK YOU.