

Your Honour Lieutenant-Governor Graydon Nicholas, Chancellor Currie, President Campbell, distinguished members of the faculty, honoured guests, families and graduates

Thank you very much indeed for this deeply appreciated honour.

Thank you also for the opportunity to share this moment with the young people graduating today from the Faculties of Nursing and Science. I congratulate you all on your achievements. I also acknowledge your families, who have given you their support and encouragement over the years. You deserve to enjoy this proud and memorable day with your graduates.

I am delighted to be here in the spectacular Richard J. Currie Center with Chancellor Currie in attendance. The first time I saw this Center was on its opening day, when it was still waiting to welcome its many users. Now, when I look out at all of you, I can see the full realization of a dream very dear to the Curries. I know no one who has given more of his heart and soul to the University of New Brunswick than Dick Currie. He and his wife Beth are truly exceptional friends and benefactors to the UNB community and I want to say a special thank you to them this morning.

It is humbling for me to receive this honour today from Chancellor Currie and President Campbell. It is equally humbling for me to address this audience. What useful advice, I wonder, can I give you at this turning point in your lives?

As you have heard, I myself am neither a nurse nor a scientist. Indeed, at your age I would not have dared to tackle these challenging disciplines and I am deeply impressed by your choices and by the success you have already demonstrated in graduating today.

For my part, I chose public service, and then philanthropy, as my careers.

Many of you might ask what a person who works professionally in philanthropy might have to say to you as you enter life beyond the university. After all, this will be a life that, if you choose to pursue a medical or scientific career, will be rigorous and disciplined. What does philanthropy, a softer and less well-defined career, have in common with science?

I believe that we have much more in common than you think. Being curious, for one thing. Searching for evidence, for another. And finally, making a difference – having an impact on the world you live in.

In the popular imagination, philanthropy, literally defined as “love of mankind”, has a rather vague connotation of “doing good”. There is no final exam and no credential for entering this profession. In fact, anyone can be one. All of you, if you have given a dollar to charity or volunteered your time in a community organization, or helped a stranger by giving your expertise to help solve a problem, are philanthropists.

But what characterizes the best in philanthropy? What is the difference that philanthropy, or science, can make? And what advice can I offer you to take as you set out to make your own difference in the world?

In answer, let me explain why curiosity, evidence and impact will be important to your lives, using my field of philanthropy.

The best philanthropists are invariably curious. They want to know not only *what* an organization might do with the resources they provide, but *why* and *how* one approach works better than another. More and more givers, especially big givers, want to know more about *how* their involvement of time and money is going to create public good. And an even more important question....how to know whether the chosen approach is the *most* effective

use of time, resources, and energy to have a sustainable impact on the problem. Good philanthropists, just as good scientists, ask *lots* of questions.

This is where evidence becomes so important. You can't answer the question of whether strategy A is better than strategy B without looking at the evidence, the data. You as graduates of the faculty of Nursing have been trained to assess the merits of treatment A over treatment B by looking at what works best for the patient. Philanthropists want to see the evidence too. This is why many charities are now working harder to collect data and to build evidence-based arguments that they can demonstrate to their donors.

Evidence goes hand in hand with impact. With evidence, you can describe an impact. You can measure impact as a number, for example the number of young children who are getting access to pre-school programs, or the numbers of families seen at a public health clinic. You can also measure impact at a larger scale as an outcome for society. Such a measure of impact might be the lower drop out rates in areas where more young children have been enrolled in pre-school or the lower rates of chronic disease in neighbourhoods with public health clinics. The more rigorously defined the impact, the more compelling it is.

Curiosity, evidence and impact are becoming the hallmarks of effective philanthropy today. They apply as much to philanthropists as they do to nurses and scientists. In fact, you may smile to hear that just in the last two weeks the Wall Street Journal published an article on philanthropy titled "*The New Science of Giving*". You have much that you share with the philanthropists who apply their curiosity, give of their time and expertise, and use evidence to create an impact on community. Above all, they and you care passionately about making the world better.

A wonderful example of this passion close to home here in New Brunswick is the work of the Honourable Margaret McCain, a former Lieutenant Governor

of this province and a philanthropist. Mrs. McCain has used curiosity, evidence and impact to make a compelling and passionate case for greater public investment in early childhood development. Through her foundation, she has been a funder, an advocate, and a catalyst for a sea change in the attention and resources devoted to children in the early years, from 0 to 5. She never stops working on this challenge. Here at UNB this past February, she and her Foundation announced funding to conduct a feasibility study into an online B.Ed. degree in early childhood education. She is a believer in evidence, in asking the right questions and in having impact on an issue that matters to us all.

What does my own story have to tell you? I can assure you that as a young graduate, trained in political science and economics, I did not think of myself as a philanthropist. My family has for three generations involved itself in public service.

During my own decade or more as a public servant in Ottawa, I took on many different roles. Each one was a fascinating opportunity for me to use my curiosity to learn about how government works. It also taught me much about using evidence to make better policy. And there was no doubt in my mind about the impact of good (and bad) public policy on the lives of Canadians.

More recently, I have worked in the nonprofit sector, building a national network for Canada's philanthropic foundations. The people working in these foundations are also scientists, in their own way. They are discoverers, innovators, champions, communicators, collaborators. They support the untested, spot the unexplored, take risks on the unproven and convene the community around the most important issues of the day. Curiosity, evidence and impact are very present in their lives.

I express the hope, in concluding, that each of you too, whatever you choose to do, will always be curious, will seek out the facts, will not be lulled by less than disciplined thinking, and will engage passionately with the world.

Two years ago, one of my predecessors at this podium, Dr Lawson Hunter, a distinguished alumnus of UNB, quoted the university's motto: *Sapere Aude* – Dare To Be Wise. At the core of this motto, said Dr Hunter, is the idea of courage – the courage to seek after knowledge. What better idea to apply to your lives, whatever your future choices?. Be curious always, search for the best answers and challenge yourselves to make a difference. This university has prepared you well, to go out and do just that.

Thank you.