

Speech given at the St. Thomas Alumni Reception

Ottawa, October 25, 2006

President Higgins,
Fellow St. Thomas University Alumni,
Guests,
Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend you a warm welcome. I am always quite eager when I have the opportunity to see how the education and life experience gained by students, while at St. Thomas, has assisted them in their endeavors since they graduated. Alumni receptions such as these provide us with an opportunity to become reacquainted with the community from which we came. Your presence here this evening reaffirms your ongoing membership to this community.

Alumni is one of the many titles that you bare and it is also a title that lends definition to your life in certain respects. The word itself is derived from the Latin verb *alere*, "to nourish," and literally means "nourished ones." There are many ways that you can think about yourself and reflect upon the nourishing experiences you had while earning this meaningful title.

In a large sense, the education that you received shaped how you engage, interpret and act in the world around you. The life experiences that you underwent during your under-graduate careers contributed greatly to the development of your character, spurred you onto a greater level of independence and ultimately prepared you to deal with life's twists and turns. The relationships that you developed throughout this process will

forever be united by this bond of change that marks such an important period in your lives.

These are simply a few thoughts that Alumni receptions present us with the opportunity to reflect upon. In turn, thoughts such as these compel us to recognize and thank the institution without which none of this would be possible. St. Thomas University has a rooted history in Atlantic Canada and a proud tradition of excellence. Your success is a testimony to this point. I encourage you all to think about how you have contributed and shared in that tradition, as well as how you can continue to do so.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce Dr. Michael Higgins, President and Vice Chancellor of St. Thomas University. A nationally distinguished scholar and teacher, Dr. Higgins is fully steeped in the traditions of Catholic and liberal education with insight into the distinctive role of St. Thomas University. Moreover, he brings extensive experience in academic and administrative leadership and appreciates the importance of teaching and research in the context of the St. Thomas tradition.