

Janyne's Notes for Hodder Hall Inauguration Speech – April 15, 2023

Principal Goldbloom, Chair Hall, Chair Maynard-Gibson, members of the Bishop's community, friends, and family,

Thank you for being here to share this day which creates another Bishop's story of gratitude to the many I already have. This is a beautiful building, and I could not be more honoured when I think of the generations of students for whom this building will become a home. Congratulations to the Housing Committee and thank you Bishop's.

Some of you have travelled far to be here. My children, Anne, M'wale and Jill and their son Noah, DJ and Cara, Dan, Tom and Aley travelled from Ottawa, Nassau, Montreal, and Toronto. Mon frère Daniel, ma sœur Louise et leurs familles, et mes amis sont venus d'Entrelacs, de Longueuil, de Montréal et d'Île Perrot. My forever friend and former Dean of Liberal and Fine Arts at the University of The Bahamas, Dr. Marjorie Brooks-Jones, and my new friend and Chair of the University of The Bahamas Board of Trustees, The Hon. Allyson Maynard Gibson, have both travelled from Nassau to be here today. Thank you.

Members of the Bishop's community have travelled from Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal. I thank you and I thank the many Townshippers who are here.

Thank you also to the team that has prepared this event, Bruce, Pam, Sarah, Debbie and everyone behind the scenes on the grounds and kitchen crew.

Cela me fait un énorme plaisir de vous retrouver et d'avoir l'occasion de partager ce beau moment de ma vie. Merci.

Having recently assumed the role of Board Trustee at the University of The Bahamas, I have found myself thinking again about the nature of a university. For some, a university is a kind of business. For me, the analogy is flawed. It's not that I don't recognise that applying rigorous management practices is as important in a university as it is in business. It's more that the business analogy risks undervaluing the deeply textured relationships formed on a university campus in favour of a transactional model of services offered and consumed.

The university idea is that of community of scholars, an idea that goes back a long time. The oldest university in continuous operation, the University of Bologna was established 935 years ago.

As I was working to shape this idea in greater detail, I was reminded by Bruce and Pam of something I wrote about twice at Bishop's, once when I first came and once again when I left.

This is the quote from when I left:

'Life as Principal of Bishop's is very full indeed, and I have learned as much from my time at Bishop's as any undergraduate. When I came to Bishop's, my first impression from the beauty of the campus and the care with which it was tended was that Bishop's was a well-loved institution. I also believed that institutions, like people, do better when well loved. I have had no reason to revise this view. Bishop's is a well-loved University, and this has contributed to all its successes.'

What's love got to do with it?

Well, it turns out that love has a lot to do with being a good university, a university that creates and shares knowledge, but also does more. A good university gives meaning to the lives of its members, creates ever-lasting bonds of friendship, models a healthy way to live with others with whom we may not always agree, teaches personal responsibility, and demonstrates ethical conduct.

Such features of university life don't add a lot of points to popular university rankings calculations, but they make a profound difference in the lives of those who work in universities and those who attend them.

It is this ability to sustain a community of scholars that Bishop's does so well.

And how does it do this?

It does so in its stories.

You can have a mission, a vision, a strategic plan – and these are important—but if you don't have a story, you don't have a community of scholars. While building and sharing knowledge about our world require us to use analytical, formal, logical, and scientific modes of thought, it is the narrative that links us one to the other and shapes our sense of self and community.

On doit certainement s'entendre sur une mission, une vision, un plan stratégique, mais cela ne suffit pas à créer une communauté. Il nous faut une histoire. Si le travail intellectuel propre à l'université se fait selon des modes de pensée logique, formelle, scientifique, c'est par le récit que se forment les liens qui nous unissent et créent une communauté tissée serrée, une communauté universitaire comme celle qui nous reçoit aujourd'hui.

The Bishop's narrative is constructed from the Bishop's stories each of us creates, shares and remembers.

Here are some of mine.

Pam Dunn enjoyed meeting the students supported by the Dunn scholarship. One year, one of these students was a noticeably awkward young man. Today, I might have more readily recognised a high-functioning form of autism. Dinner had been scheduled at 5 Harrold Drive. When students began to leave after the meal, he began to pace in the hallway and didn't seem to know how to leave. Two of the remaining students, who clearly knew him, approached him gently and suggested they all walk back to residence together. He relaxed and they left. He graduated the following year. At the reception after Convocation, his mother sought me out to tell me how grateful she was to Bishop's. Many people had told her that her son's social difficulties would make it impossible for him to be successful in college. Bishop's students proved them wrong.

Twenty-five years ago, Eddie coached the team that brought home the Canadian University Men's Basketball National Championship. Thank you, Eddie. Bruce and Dave were in Halifax for the game as were many Bishop's students and alumni. Bruce called me to ask whether he had a budget with which to support celebrations. As expenditures were always carefully managed, there was no such budget; still, this seemed like a moment to splurge – a little. I understand everyone had a great time.

Early in my tenure, dozens of professors invited me to attend a class so that before going on the road to raise friends and funds, I might have greater insight into what we did each day. In classes in music, business, psychology, philosophy, literature, theatre, history, mathematics, political science and more, I saw professors who displayed equal love and respect for their discipline and for their students.

So off I went to raise friends and funds armed with stories.

The 1995 Quebec referendum on sovereignty was a particularly difficult moment for us, as students were accused, unfairly for the most part, of illegal voting based on a nebulous definition of residence. It was both a public relations challenge as we were vilified in the media, and a deeply difficult moment for some of our students. To Ralph, for all you did to help our students through this difficult time, thank you. To Bruce, then Director of Public Relations who, when a journalist wanted a quote the morning after, said, 'I feel like moving to Toronto', not so much.

Marc, this year's Alumnus of the Year, sometimes treated me to breakfast at The Ritz in Montreal, time during which he shared his belief that what had made Bishop's important in

his life would continue – and it has, at his daughter's graduation from Bishop's and now as Alumnus of the Year.

Drew, who initiated our participation in the Model UN, once wrote me in devastating prose that spirited debate would not be quelled by my charming offer of neatly arranged crudités to accompany our leadership team meetings. In a fit of pique, I cancelled the crudités. We carried on with robust debates and did great things together.

Curt once mapped out the detailed history of a convoluted plagiarism case that was headed to The Visitor, an obscure university function then vested in the Anglican Archbishop, one that had not been used in fifty years or more and had its roots in Britain in the Middle Ages. Curt's narrative was perfect but, in the end, what mattered was the Archbishop's wise choice not to wade in with a new definition of plagiarism.

Possibly equally wise was Jean-Luc's explanation of where money I thought we had, but couldn't quite find in the reports, had gone. He explained that it was sometimes best to keep some funds away from the eyes of Principals. They might overspend. Given what I have just told you about the Halifax celebration, he had a point.

Arshad, then on the executive of the faculty union at a time of tense relations, joined the Bishop's delegation to the National Assembly to present our case for increased government funding, making the decision to place community above group interest. It could not have been easy for him, but the show of solidarity made all the difference, and our request for increased funding was granted.

Faculty and staff did so much more than their actual jobs: Bill, Business professor, leading students to international case study competitions and also coaching rugby; Jamie, philosophy professor and producer of annual musical shows; Dave, on regular Buildings and Grounds duty, building the most fabulous board room table and later a beautiful desk I still cherish; Lissa, Business professor and coach, and champion of the student refugee programme; Glen, using his expertise as a professor of literature and his love for movies to build a new programme in film studies and attract new students to campus. So many.

Then there was the moment at the Toronto Club when Scott Griffin introduced Pam and me to an achingly sweet maple desert just seconds before, acting somewhat delinquently, we introduced him to his new job as Chancellor. He was stunned but went on to do the job brilliantly, I am told.

There was the pride we all felt when Lorne was awarded our very first Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, in astrophysics, no less.

Il y a aussi ce beau moment du premier don de la ville de Sherbrooke, un don parrainé par le maire Perrault, un don qui signalait le respect et la bonne entente entre notre

communauté majoritairement de langue anglaise et le contexte francophone et québécois qui est aussi le nôtre. Merci, monsieur le maire, et merci aussi à Hugh et Paule qui ont été les premiers à travailler très fort en faveur d'un rapprochement entre Bishop's et le milieu sherbrookois francophone.

Throughout those years, I also had the benefit of counsel from Ron Lawless, our Board Chair, a man whose wisdom, patience and support provided me with a model of effective and ethical leadership. And I would not have the chance to join this community had it not been for Philip and Tom, both on the Search Committee, who took a chance on untested me.

Not all stories are happy ones. Michael Childs and I once had to navigate our way through a sexual harassment case, long before the MeToo movement, and long before there were detailed protocols for dealing with such cases. But navigate we did, with the help of two very brave young women.

I once drew the ire of the entire Athletics Department and most alumni when I had the brilliant idea of banning tailgating at football games! Thankfully, wiser colleagues walked me back and we settled on a more modest proposal.

There were grand moments as well. The Bishop Tutu Convocation was one such.

My son M'wale has been asking me where all the photos went, so if there is an archivist in the room, please help.

Desmond Tutu told the story of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, hearing the horrific experiences suffered by many under apartheid, but he also told stories of courage and resistance. As he and Alex led the Recessional accompanied by a rousing version of "All the Saints Go Marching In", we knew we had just witnessed the most eloquent defense of the choice to walk always with faith, hope, and charity.

And who can forget Alex, our Chancellor, who was always funny when I was earnest, who loved Bishop's and presided over Convocation with pomp and elegance, supported by Joanie who could manage all social events with unfailing grace?

Throughout those years, there was my family and there were my friends. My children and stepchildren who shamed me when I asked Jocelyne to schedule Thanksgiving, but who came anyway. My friends who forgave me all my trespasses, and still do. I have never thanked you enough.

This day would have been special for Gary as well. Gary, my husband, the man who held my hand when I needed it held, who came to every event and who hosted every party and every dinner with grace and humour – not always an easy role to play for a man who often

would have preferred to be reading poetry. Knowing how hard this was at times for him, I honour and thank Paule and Fiona, who have had the same important role.

As I thought about the many stories which cemented my membership in this community, I wondered whether, after all these years, Bishop's still had a heart full of stories.

And then I reread last fall's Alumni magazine which led with the story of a young man, Jordan Slaman, who had to leave Bishop's before completing his studies to undergo cancer treatment. Jordan died last fall, but not before the degree committee had awarded him a baccalaureate degree, delivered on a compassionate basis, and not before he had had the opportunity to return to campus with his wife and share his memories of happiness here. There's a lot of Bishop's heart in that story.

C'est en relisant la revue de l'automne dernier que j'ai compris que Bishop's demeurerait une communauté tissée serrée. Le texte en primeur porte sur le parcours d'un étudiant, Jordan Slaman, qui devait terminer ses études en 2015 et qui avait dû abandonner à la suite d'un diagnostic de cancer, une situation qui lui imposait d'entreprendre un traitement. Le pronostique à était positif. Pourtant, le cancer est revenu. Son épouse s'est manifestée l'été dernier pour dire à Bishop's combien l'expérience de son mari à l'université avait été importante dans la vie de Jordan. L'université a convoqué les instances appropriées ; celles-ci lui ont décerné un baccalauréat pour cause de compassion. Au mois d'août dernier, Jordan est revenu à l'université pour trouver un beau moment de bonheur. Il est décédé le 21 septembre. On s'entend ; ça, c'est une histoire d'amour et de communauté.

I also read Michael's letter in the same issue, one in which he focused on volunteering, drawing on his family's tradition of stellar community work and introducing us to members of the Bishop's community who work every day to make our world a better place.

Thank you, Michael, for the outstanding role you have played during your 15 years as Principal. Hugh and I know that being a Bishop's Principal can bring a lot of joy. We also know that it's hard work. As university leaders, we get to write but one chapter in a never-ending story. Yours is great.

180 years later, the University story goes on.

To the Bishop's community of scholars that has bestowed this great honour on me, I offer my deepest gratitude, and I invite you to join me in hoping that future stories of knowledge, love and friendship will thrive this beautiful building.

Merci.