



**Convocation Address by Dr. Ann Dale**  
**Thursday, May 27, 2004**  
**Royal Road University, Victoria, BC, Canada**

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Thank you, it is a great honour to be standing before you as a Trudeau fellow, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, honoured guests, faculty and friends, members of the graduating classes, some of whom I have had the privilege of teaching. I thought that I would share with you on this very special day for our graduates and their families, some thoughts on leadership, legacy and passion, attributes that I believe Pierre Elliott Trudeau demonstrated throughout his life.

But first, I would like to thank the staff of Royal Roads University for their support over the last four years, and in particular I would like to thank my faculty colleagues. Here at Royal Roads, the faculty has a rare collegiality, some of us have argued, laughed and cried together over the years, and it is indeed a rare environment. I remember in my interview here in 2000 saying to the selection committee that what I was searching for was a community with integrity, that diversity of thought, perspectives was important, as long as people held them with integrity. And there is a great deal of integrity in the faculty here at Royal Roads University. Their support and friendship has literally allowed me to flower, and has contributed greatly to my work here at Royal Roads.

Leadership, I believe, needs the same thing a flower needs to survive. First and foremost, flowers need access to good soil, air and water, and sun, basically the foundation for all life here on Earth. But in order to thrive, flowers need to be nurtured. Equally, I believe, leaders need to be nurtured as well. A leader is only as good as the team that surrounds them, and they must co-create an environment that allows all members of the team to flower, to be the very best that they can be. And I believe, as some of my learners know from our classes together, a good leader also has to be able to rock and roll, to create an environment where people work and have fun.

Leadership, I believe, is not afraid of difference, for diversity is the spice of life. Even more importantly, diversity is critical to creativity and innovation. Part of my research involves looking at single-resource communities and what characteristics allow one place to successfully transcend an economic collapse, while in other cases, the community dies. The key may lie in diversity, how open the community is to outside ideas and how diverse their access is to different kinds of capital, especially intellectual capital.

I think diversity will be one of the most important issues facing Canadian society in this century— what will the diversity of place look like—physical and non-physical? What will the diversity of space look like—mental, emotional and spiritual? What will the diversity of being look like—human and non-human? These are opportunities and challenges facing communities in the next century. For example, it may well be that diversity (particularly human capital) is critical to the capacity of a community to successfully move from a single-resource industry to identify and develop other economic opportunities. Indeed, it may be key to competing in an interconnected global marketplace. John F. Kennedy stated “if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.”

Leaders are people who see a problem and take direct actions to solve them. Hannah Taylor, Simon Jackson, Ryan Hreljac and Ken Lyotier come to mind. Hannah Taylor, an eight-year old girl in Winnipeg, became concerned about all the homeless people she saw on the street. She then proceeded to raise \$50,000 for Winnipeg’s homeless by collecting change in jars decorated like ladybugs. A leader sees a problem and acts on identifying solutions and making change happen. Hannah was invited to meet with Prime Minister Martin and apparently was a little confused as to who she was meeting. “At first I thought it was something in a church, because, you know, a minister. And then I heard that he was the country’s leader and I got so excited to meet him”.

Simon Jackson, started his campaign to save the Kermode bears—the spirit bear—at the age of eleven, and has gone on to create the Spirit Bear Youth Coalition, the largest youth

led environmental network in the world with a network of five million young people in more than 30 countries. I would like to quote from this remarkable young man.

Each day presents a new challenge. Each generation faces a test to the human will and spirit. I am a child of the Gulf War generation. I have seen the travesties that humankind can inflict on one another and on our planet. Yet, with each day, with each seemingly overwhelming challenge that we face, both personally and collectively, we are also presented with our most powerful shield from failure and our greatest vehicle for positive change. Hope. For without hope, we have no reason to wake up in the morning, no will to improve on our mistakes, and no prospect of happiness. It is because of hope that each day offers new opportunities, unparalleled successes, and unrealized change. For it is hope that helped bring down the Berlin Wall. It is hope that helped free Nelson Mandela. And it is through hope—and all of its subsidiary support mechanisms—that has kept me going during the darkest days in my quest to help save our spirit bear.

Ryan was six years old when a talk by his grade one teacher changed his life. She told the class about people in Africa who had a very hard time getting clean water and access to wells. Without this basic human necessity, people, especially children, can get sick and sometimes die. Deeply moved, Ryan persuaded his parents to pay him to do extra chores and finally came up with the \$75 he thought was needed to drill a well. But he was in for a shock; WaterCan (a non-profit organization that provides clean water to poor countries) told him that it would actually cost \$2000 to build a well on another continent. Ryan didn't give up, he got very busy doing more chores and expanding his fundraising. Several months later he finally collected the necessary \$2,000. Since that first well was dug in Uganda in 1999, RyansWell.ca has, with the support of organizations such as WaterCan; CPAR; the Canadian International Development Agency, and Free the Children, raised over \$80,000 to provide clean water to people in Africa.

Ken Lyotier saw that many of the Downtown Eastside homeless, the bidders or dumpster divers often did not receive a fair price for the recycled cans and bottles they retrieved

from the dumpsters—there was no recycling depot. He created ‘United We Can’—a street charity that now employs 33 homeless men and generates 1.5 million dollars in revenues from recycled material recovered from the garbage. There are now two other businesses—selling bicycles and plants nurtured from the cuttings thrown away. Of all the people I have met in my life, Ken Lyotier “walks his talk” every day of his life.

Leadership, I believe, is an individual who makes a difference in their community. My research on Saltspring Island explores how social capital, and in particular how networks can be mobilized to create more sustainable communities, is reinforcing the difference that key individuals can make in a community. These key individuals have certain personal characteristics in common. The people who stand out the most have very little blame or judgment about others, again they see the problem and quickly move to identifying solutions. Equally, they do not talk about enemies, but rather, are what we are defining as bridgers. They have the ability to work across diverse groups of people and actively seek out strategic alliances, coalitions and build relationships between networks. And like the people I have mentioned today, they dare to dream, they have a vision and they work towards realizing that dream, in spite of obstacles, in spite of how difficult the work is, they continue to move steadfastly forward. “Don’t be afraid of the space between your dreams and reality. If you can dream it you can make it so.” (Belva Davis).

We all have a choice everyday in our lives in every interaction we have with other people. We can chose, like Hannah, to empower others or to disempower others, often, simply in the way we talk to each other. And we can choose to maximize our interventions in the environment, or to minimize our interventions in the environment. What a better world it would be if we all consciously thought about our interventions before acting upon them, think about reconciling the environment, with the social and the economic, for what is good for one, must be good for others in a sustainable world.

Great leaders are passionate about their dreams, their visions and their integrity. They may compromise on the way to get people to help achieve their dream, but they adhere to their vision, often when others would give up or give in. They dare to be different, and in

the long run, it is their passion for something grander than themselves that sustains them. And the difference between a good and a great leader is that the former are often seen as leaders while the latter are surrounded by many who believe they are the catalyst, the leaders leading the charge. And great leaders have the courage to be different, to sometimes put their lives on the line so that others may live, as my father and my beloved son, Danny James, did. And perhaps the greatest courage of all, is when individuals who have lost someone they loved dearly, honour them by living their remaining lives as richly as they can, in spite of their pain.

And that brings me to legacy, I think as human beings we are driven to create meaning for ourselves, to make sense of our world and ourselves in that world. We may not all be leaders, but as individuals, we can all make a difference. We all have an opportunity to leave a legacy by the way we walk on the planet, and leaving our children and our grandchildren a better world than the world we were privileged to walk in. What if we all strived for making our first human response to be that of compassion and doing no harm in all of our actions every day of our lives? What a wonderful legacy to leave our world—one day at a time.

For my parting thoughts, I have a request to make of our graduating classes. I ask you to co-create the conditions for a more sustainable world for children everywhere by making the dream of Pierre Elliott Trudeau a reality. I offer you Pierre Trudeau's quote.

What I dare to believe is that men and women everywhere will come to understand that no individual, no government, no nation is capable of living in isolation, or of pursuing policies inconsistent with the interests—both present and future—of others. That self-respect is not self-perpetuating but depends for its existence on access to social justice. That each of us must do all in our power to extend to all persons an equal measure of human dignity—to ensure through our efforts that hope and faith in the future are not reserved for a minority of the world's population, but are available to all.

---Pierre Elliott Trudeau, 1975