

Skén:nen, Greetings and Nia:wen for inviting me to be part of your luncheon.

What a great opportunity to acknowledge your work and dedication and the belief you have in McMaster University. We have many distinguished guests here today. Welcome to everyone...what an incredible amount of knowledge, experience and passion we have in this room.

I would also like to take a moment to personally acknowledge the work of past President Patrick Deane. I admire his commitment to relationship building from local to global. I am certain he was instrumental in my appointment as Chancellor. And, I will forever remember, that he made it a priority to visit and meet the community of Six Nations as a new McMaster president. This act of relationship building did not go unnoticed and has significant impacts.

Since my first campus tour in 1990, I fell in awe with MAC. The mix of academic tradition, trailblazing research, dynamic learning style, the vibrancy of the students, it was palpable and visible on the grounds then as it is today. I am grateful my journey has brought me full circle back to campus. Like you, it is a privilege to be in the service of McMaster and to uphold the mission and the values of the University.

Over the years, I have participated in MAC through guest speaking, President's Retreat, conferences and recently a Socrates Project performance, but what also ties me to MAC in a significant way is my daughter, Semiah Smith. She is currently in 3rd year Health Sciences. And, I was so thrilled and relieved when she chose McMaster as her University. I'm happy to say, McMaster now runs in the family.

In my two new roles – Mac parent and Mac Chancellor – I'm seeing my alma mater in new ways and with fresh eyes, with an even deeper appreciation and level of commitment. It is wonderful to meet more members of the McMaster family and learn about the incredible work and contributions of groups like MURA . I can say with confidence that everyone here should be incredibly proud of the University you help to create.

We're in an era of outstanding McMaster accomplishments. Not only are the top level national and international rankings important but equally important is the type of atmosphere, environment and core values the University maintains over time. Core values like mutual respect and benefit, reciprocity not only within the campus but extending into community.

I think it's important to remember that recognitions like the Global Teaching Excellence Award, our standing in world rankings and being ranked 2nd worldwide in terms of Global Impact are not just one-year, one-off accomplishments. During my MAC Centre for Continuing Education graduation address a few weeks ago, I shared that one of the ideas that drives me is that there is no such thing as an over-night success. That's true for individuals and especially true for our University. McMaster is accomplished, respected and so well-recognized because you and your colleagues are playing the

long game. It's the summation of the small contributions and hard work that leads to success. And also, your work does not go unnoticed and has significant impacts.

On behalf of the entire McMaster family, I want to thank you for your service. Your work remains the foundation of McMaster achievements in 2019 and beyond. I also want to congratulate you for maintaining your connections to McMaster and to each other through your involvement with MURA. It's great to see you valuing and nurturing these relationships. In particular, I want to thank the volunteers on the MURA Council for leading and sustaining the association and for making the organization so active and vital.

Your efforts speak to something that is very close to my heart. As a proud *Konkwehon:we*, Mohawk woman and a proud alumna, as Chancellor I aim to carry my Haudenosaunee values in the work I do with McMaster and to share the wisdom passed on to me from many teachers and elders.

As you may know, Indigenous communities have always held elders in high regard as community treasures, knowledge keepers and inspirational role models. Not only that...the youth/elder connection is central to the wellbeing of our society. Both elders and youths have voice and agency, both need to be listened to, protected and cherished. Both are essential in navigating change and continuity.

University communities are actually very good at respecting legacy and keeping our most experienced community members engaged. We have active professors emeriti, for example, events like Convocation that are infused with tradition, and of course, the McMaster University Retirees' Association.

But we can do better and it starts by acknowledging our retirees' role as our community treasures. Let's recognize and celebrate how important your knowledge and perspectives are to the current and future generations of McMaster's faculty, staff, students and alumni. And hopefully it involves you, our elders, embracing the task and responsibility of imparting your knowledge and sharing your experiences for the benefit of our entire McMaster community. Your personal engagement adds immense value to the campus. Much respect and appreciation for your time and energy.

Alongside Acting President David Farrar, I look forward to engaging with you further and planning for a Brighter World, in an illuminated campus who's light shines far and wide.

Thank you for inviting me to be part of your program today, I look forward to listening to you. All the best to you and your family in the holiday season.

Nia:wen. Thank you.