

Alumni Dinner Notes Oct. 29, 1999

*that Stewart McTominis will introduce in a moment.*

— welcome the class of 1949 – also have grads ~~from~~ celebrating their 55<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries – today when we met I heard your stories about <sup>all the ways the</sup> ~~how~~ university has changed ~~it~~ since you were students, but I want to assure you that all of the enduring values of your days at Dal remain, – those values are:

- our commitment to ensuring the best education possible for our students
- our commitment to hiring the best professors with the best research records to work at Dal
- our commitment to ensuring that Dal is closely attuned to the needs of our community and committed to helping build a strong and prosperous society

- welcome to Senator Bernie Boudreau *+ his wife Jean*
- this is the first time he has been on campus in two last 2 yrs - his first 3 trips cost him \$7 million - I'm glad we were able to offer you discount tickets, thank you*
- also want to congratulate the winners of the Gordon Archibald *fight* Award given annually to distinguished alumni for their *Bernie* achievements and contributions to building up Dalhousie over many years: Wes Campbell, Fred Fountain and Bernadette Macdonald – I also want to congratulate Professor Phil Campagna for winning the Alumni Award for Teaching Excellence *You will hear more about our award winners in a moment.*

My purpose here tonight, apart from being a warm up act for

Nancy White, is to bring you news of how the university is doing – if I were to summarize my message in just a few words I'd say that we've got tremendous momentum going for us at Dal, but that there are some dark storm clouds on the horizon that we all need to watch out for

If you want to know what I'm talking about when I say momentum, you should ~~simply~~ take a moment when you're walking out tonight and grab a copy of the latest DalNews — the lead stories say it all: (Hold up copy of paper)

These achievements are possible because we've gathered a great team of people together at Dal who have been wonderfully supported by our alumni and friends

For the past three years at these events I've reported to you on the progress of our latest capital campaign – by now, most of you probably know that our recently concluded Capital Ideas Campaign was a huge success – over \$80 million was raised to support the renewal of our university — as a result, we now have 3 new buildings going up on campus — we also have funds available to hire 29 externally supported professors – and to make sure that we continue to attract the students with the 6<sup>th</sup> highest entering grades of any class of new university students in Canada, we have some wonderful new scholarships and bursaries

*I'd like to thank John Kisley our campaign chair, Dale Goddard, our VP External & all the volunteers who helped make the campaign such a success*

The heart of our university is our curriculum, the programs of study we offer our students to prepare them for the world of

work and community engagement that lies ahead of them — in many ways, as you know, Dal is an old, traditional university & our distinguished alumni gathered here tonight for their 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries give testimony to that — but behind the ivy on the walls and the Dal tradition, there is a world of change and innovation going on at Dal — in the last 18 months alone, we've introduced 24 new undergraduate and graduate programs — new programs to join our highly regarded established curriculum to ensure that we stay fresh and focused on the needs of today's students and the world around them. — the nursing program and the MBA Financial Services program mentioned in today's DalNews are just two examples of this kind of creativity — literally every Faculty at the university has similar exciting examples to boast about

The focus in all of these programs is ~~the needs of~~ <sup>the needs</sup> of our students — we're here, because they want to be here — in that spirit, I'm pleased to tell you briefly about <sup>very</sup> an exciting initiative at Dalhousie that is attracting attention across the country — <sup>we call it</sup> ~~that's~~ the Dalhousie Career Portfolio, which this year won a \$1.2 million award from the McConnell Foundation as one the programs destined to change the face of Canadian higher education — the Dal Career Portfolio aims to help our students focus their thoughts on what they want to do when they leave the university, make sure that they are following the program of studies and building the skill set that they will need to succeed in the years ahead, and it helps them link their classroom studies to their career goals and community needs by arranging community service placements — at the same time, Dalhousie has

I'd like to thank Dr. Sam Scully on VP Academic & Provost & Eric McKee on VP Student Services for putting together this successful & innovative proposal.

taken a lead in this area by starting a unique skills transcript to parallel the transcript that records student's courses and grades – the skills transcript records in considerable detail exactly what analytical, communication, numeric, group process and information technology skills our students have mastered — already we have 2000 arts and science students enrolled in skills transcript courses and every one of the professors who teaches one of these courses has participated in a series of professional development workshops designed to help them rethink their curriculum to ensure that they deliver a first rate course focused on skills development as well as disciplinary knowledge – this is an exciting way for our faculty to return to the pedagogical roots of what they teach and it ensures that Dal students will be among the best prepared women and men to hit the job market in the years ahead.

We all know that work world will be a very different than the one that greeted our graduates in 1939 and 1949 – today, the demands of the knowledge economy have transformed virtually every sector of the economy – in this new knowledge age, the university plays a critical role as one of the <sup>major</sup> central engines of development, helping transfer new ideas, innovations and technology from the laboratories and classrooms of our best professors to the world around us – the university is not the only important cog in this wheel of this new economic engine, but we're one of the central ones — this brings me to the dark clouds looming on our horizon

We all know that the Nova Scotia government faces some

*If it takes decades to build a great university - it only takes a short while to wreck one*

difficult days ahead and that this is going to mean belt tightening for many institutions, like Dalhousie, that receive substantial public funding — but it is important that all of us understand the stakes we face — in the knowledge economy we must ensure that our knowledge institutions remain strong and competitive — taking a broad sword to budget cutting will completely undermine our capacity to be competitive for years to come → we need a strategic approach to dealing with public finance problems that identifies those elements that are crucial to our success in the future and makes sure that they remain strong despite the challenges of the day — right now, the federal government is investing over a billion dollars in equipping and renewing Canada's university labs and research programs, — to participate, Dalhousie and the other Nova Scotia universities need matching provincial funds— last year, we got \$8 million from <sup>our</sup> province for this competition and we won and invested \$20 million— there is still another \$500 million of federal money remaining in this program — but at the moment, Dalhousie <sup>+ the rest of NS</sup> will not be able to compete for any more money because our government has refused to commit matching funds— if we don't enter the next stage of competition, the rest of the country will certainly ante up and play for the big prize— they will invest in the future and we won't — as they move forward, we'll all move back -- tell me, how will that help Nova Scotia succeed in the new economy?

So, we face some big challenges ahead to work with our friends, alumni and our government to make sure we adopt sensible, strategic policies to build for the future — fortunately, at

Dalhousie we're better positioned today than we've been in over 2 decades to commit ourselves to that challenge – as many of you know, when Dalhousie expanded rapidly in the 1960s and '70s, we built up a very large university debt – by 1985, we owed \$40 million and our annual debt payments were costing us \$4 million a year from our annual operating budget – in 1990 our Board of Governors committed itself to come to grips with that debt – tonight, after a very tough decade of sacrifices and creative solutions, I'm pleased to tell you that as of the end of <sup>this month</sup> October, Dalhousie University will be completely debt free – after 12 years of balanced and surplus budgets I'd have to say that we ivory tower types have done ok – so, while there are some storm clouds out there on the horizon, at least we can now afford to go back to the pawn shop and reclaim our old umbrella <sup>if it starts to rain</sup> to help us through the rainy days –

That brings my remarks for tonight to a close – it's a pleasure for me to see so many of you gathered here tonight to support your university – I hope you draw from my remarks a message of strength and commitment to deal with all that lies ahead, as well as a deep sense of satisfaction that the modern Dalhousie is fulfilling all of the dreams of our honoured alumni who walked our campus so many years ago — we've done great things together in the past and we're going to do great things together in the future – thank you and good evening

I'd like to express my appreciation to Allen Shaw, the Chair of our Bd. of Governors & Bryan Mason, our VP Finance & Administration for their leadership in bringing about this remarkable result.