

Salutation – (Friends of the University – Monday, May 28, 2012)

There is no greater institution in Edmonton than the University of Alberta. More than 50,000 people work at the University most of the year. And there is no other institution that benefits Alberta more than the University of Alberta because, according to its founder Henry Marshall Tory, its goal is nothing less than "the uplifting of the whole people" educationally.

However, I am not going to speak about that, but about the Friends. The Friends were founded during the 2nd World War, in 1943, as the first NOT-FOR-PROFIT VOLUNTEER PRO-UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION in Canada. There are now over 100,000 of such not-for-profit organizations. 13 years later, in 1956, the Friends started "Henry Marshall Tory lectures", a brilliant idea, by inviting to the University very distinguished individuals, to speak on important topics of the day. The first speaker was Mr. Lewis W. Douglas, USA Ambassador to Great Britain, and the last speaker, Mr. David Jacobson, the USA Ambassador to Canada. In 56 years since 1956, we have had 42 of such speakers. The admission to the lectures is free for students, professors and the general public. Since 1984 the Friends also started to invite excellent speakers to our Annual General Meetings. As of this year, we have heard 27 of them, among them 8 Chancellors and 8 Presidents of our University, many Deans and various other important personalities. Our Chancellors and Presidents, of course, are honorable members of our Society. Besides

the speakers, the Friends assist our University in its development, support programs that enrich University life, but its most important role is to build a strong relationship between the University and the broader Alberta community. Friends also provide scholarships for needy students, offer awards for meritorious students, finance bursaries for mature women, support purchases of special books for honorary degree recipients, sponsor special events etc. One can find more detailed information about Friends on our Website, so - let me finish. Half a century ago, USA President J.F. Kennedy told Americans; "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country". That applies to the Friends of the University of Alberta: they did and can still do a lot, by promoting, encouraging, inspiring and assisting the University in its development, teaching and research! Therefore, to borrow from John McCrae ^{FAVORITE POEM} "In Flanders fields": "To you, from failing hands we throw the torch...be yours, to hold it high". It was a great privilege and pleasure to chair The Friends. Many thanks to all the members, who served with me for the last 20 years, and especially to our fantastic Secretary Treasurer, Mr. Ron Betty. Good luck and all the best to the new Executive and membership and the University of Alberta. Peter Savaryn