

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
SPRING CONVOCATION
June 12, 13, 14 and 15, 2018**

**J 12 13JD Tc31 orR)Tot
ofArts and SocialScienceseren
Convocation address:**

This has got me more nervous

And number three is, “just show up.” Just show up. It’s very simple. Because the universe needs you to show up so that the universe can meet you.

Into my study of Haida art, it was really about relationships. It was about relationships with elders, with artists and with ceremony. It was about going into the forest and digging roots and going into museum storage rooms and studying baskets; that became my classroom. I learned to weave a very complex art form and I began sewing regalia for ceremonies and I loved it. And after lots of discussion, at the time with various artists, we discussed innovation. This was back in the 80s. We discussed, “What more can we do? What more can we do to advance Haida art to the world?” And it was Bill Reid who said to me, “Somebody has to do fashion. Somebody has to do it or somebody else that’s not from our nation might do it.” So that became a seed in my mind and I thought to myself, “I can do that.” I had a history of making garments and regalia and I thought, “Yes, I can do that.” So that was the beginning of innovation in creating a new medium in Haida art.

And that was 30 years ago, and it’s really amazing—it’s surreal—that I’m standing here even talking about it. It’s been an incredible journey. And my artistic path now has been 43 years since my beginning of making traditional Haida art and contemporary clothing.

Part of my growth as an artist was to become the innovator, the starter. And also in business, I became the survivor. Literally surviving three recessions in 17 years. And it was not an easy path. But it’s been a great journey of learning. And that learning I’m going to be putting into a book that I hope will help other up-and-coming designers, up-and-coming artists and entrepreneurs. I think it’s very important.

I never thought of myself as really doing extraordinary work, it was just work that I based on these three principles that I just discussed. And I put it into my work, that whole idea of transformation, of pride when you put on a garment to make you feel extraordinary. And I think I’ve done that. And now at 63 years old, and this just happened recently, I can truthfully say that I was born to do this work. I say that with absolute conviction that I was born to do this. And when you can stand and say that, you’re standing in your power, you’re standing in a place that you know you were born to do this, and that nobody can take that away from you.

And so my wish for all of you graduates today is that you will be able to stand no matter if you change your occupation, or if you do a whole different work from what you’ve studied, because there’s nu w d I says aeaaelTc 0.4.94.9.480Tc 0W00Tw 2.848 0 Tdftns bo 0.5)2)11.4 6.8 e)1.d4 (uH \$3.2