



**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
SPRING CONVOCATION  
JUNE 3, 4, 5 and 6, 2008**

**Convocation Address**  
**By Dr. Mossadiq Umedaly**  
Chairman and CEO of Xantrex Technology

*An honorary doctor of laws was conferred on Dr. Mossadiq Umedaly during the Faculty Business Administration Ceremony on Tuesday, June 3, 2008. The following is Dr. Umedaly's convocation address.*

Chancellor Louie, President Stevenson, honored graduates, family members and friends, thank you.

Of the honours and awards I have received in my lifetime – of the many demonstrations that I have been welcomed and accepted into the Canadian community – this is the sweetest.

To understand how much this means to me, you should know how much it means to me to be a Canadian.

I came to this country to go to school in 1970. I was a 19-year-old Ugandan following a slightly unusual path. Among my friends, at least among those adventurous enough to go away to university, most went to England – at the time, the seat of power in the British Commonwealth. A few were more interested in being at what they believed was the centre of world power, went to the United States.

But I saw something different and much more appealing in Canada. I saw a responsible, humble democracy – a place where then-Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau was pursuing a “just society,” in Canada and around the world. Looking out, from the middle of Africa, this was a beacon of light.

This judgment was borne out two years later, when Idi Amin turned Uganda into a bloodbath and Canada accepted me, my family, and many others as refugees. Canada did this with the trust that we would not be a burden to this country. Indeed, they hoped that we would make a contribution.

I have tried, in the years since, to return this gift – to live up to the promise that is Canada. And it has been a source of pride and pleasure that I have been able to work, here and around the world, on endeavours that are truly worthwhile. Whether building a medical university in the developing world or searching for business, technical, social and political solutions to a gathering environmental and energy crisis, I have risen, most

