



**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
SPRING CONVOCATION
JUNE 5, 6, 7 and 8, 2007**

**Convocation Address
By Dr. Eleanor Wachtel**

An honorary doctor of Letters was conferred on Dr. Eleanor Wachtel during the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Ceremony on Tuesday, June 7, 2007. The following is Dr. Wachtel's convocation address.

Chancellor (Brandt Louie), President (Michael Stevenson), Distinguished Guests, Faculty, Parents and especially, Graduates.

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be here. I feel a particular affinity with Simon Fraser because I was welcomed here to teach as an adjunct

reader; that books are infinite and infinitely rich. And I remember the novelist, Carol Shields's saying that she never read novels to escape – not even when she was very ill—but reading for her was a necessary enlargement of her life. And here she touches on what I was saying earlier -- about you're being a highly prized cohort—she told me that “what changes people is access to language and their ability to expand their expression of themselves through language.” I always remember that line from T.S. Eliot: “I gotta use words when I talk to you.” But what words – and what worlds they open. Carol quoted St. Augustine who equated reading a book with having

it's right in front of you. The future is behind your back because it's what you can't see, unless you catch a glimpse of it out of the corner of your eye, over your shoulder.

You can't see it. So it's cB9uone