



**SIMON FRASER UNIV
SPRING CONVOCA
October 6 and 7, 2**

**Convocation Addi
By Wendy Grant-J**

Former three-term Musqueam Chief who launched Cana
and first woman elected Regional Chief of th

*An honorary Doctor of Laws was conferred on Dr. Gran
and Faculty of Science ceremony on Friday, October 7, .
convocation address.*

Let me begin by thanking Simon Fraser University for th
Taylor, and President Andrew Petter, I say Hay
acknowledge and pay tribute to my fellow ho
Holling. I am truly humbled to be in this gre:
may I join with others in saying congratulatio
are finally getting this day of pride, achieven
here, you have had the support of your famil
who all take great pride and share in your ac
these people who generously contributed to t

As I consider the idea of education, I'd like t
favorite daughter ... she's my only daughter,
today, education means different things to di
different thoughts which I wanted to share w
want to admit it, actually, she gave me my o
messages I was considering were not perceiv
which we should all celebrate today. Becaus
benefit from all that you've accomplished. W
have been trying to capture what the sharing
my experiences, as a proud First Nations wo
my education experience in the public schoo
the need for our people to aspire to higher le:
was able to gain outside of the academic wor
which I learned in public school. For I truly l

my people are at the same level of importance. Not at a lower or higher importance, but equal to the academic education we received outside of our communities.

I remember clearly standing on the dirt floor in our long house a number of years ago having been called to speak at a traditional naming ceremony. When I looked at the young people gathered in the longhouse, it became crystal clear to me what needed to be shared, and it was this: Although everything which was taking place and being said was not written down, what they, as young people, were witnessing was the opening of their ancestral history books. Their ancestors' knowledge for them to hear, to understand, to absorb, and to use. Their ancestors had chosen and developed this unique way to pass on their knowledge, and they were participating in a different way of being educated. If we could somehow come to accept that this process of teaching and sharing of the knowledge of our people is as important to their education as every written book they read in school, it is for me and my people crucial to have the academic world, and the larger society acknowledge, understand, and respect that while our way of teaching and education was different, it was no less important to our society as a whole than any other form of sharing.

I had been thinking of this idea for a while, then I opened the newspaper, on Monday, October the third, to see the headline, which read: Elders Bring Cultural Wisdom to SFU Campuses. I thought, oh no! That was the message I was planning to deliver at the Simon Fraser University ceremony today!

I have to say to you, Andrew Petter, thank you for hearing my message before I gave it! Your program here at SFU will go a long way to supporting the idea that education means different things to different people.

As so many people have said in so many arenas, education sets you free. Free to think, free to explore, free to question, free to be whoever you want to be, and free to move beyond prejudice. One of the greatest lessons my late father gave me was never to accept at face value anything he told me. He said "Question everything I say to you, and don't be afraid to challenge me, even though I am your father." And as I look back to all the great traditional teachers in my life and in