

## Follow dreams, grads told

### Artist Marilyn Walker addresses students at Brock University convocation ceremony Saturday

Posted 5 days ago

The courage to follow your dreams is what really makes the difference.

That was the message brought by local artist and expert quilter Marilyn Walker at the Brock University fall convocation Saturday.

About 850 students received degrees from Brock in morning and afternoon ceremonies.

The university conferred an honorary degree on Walker, who addressed graduates at the morning ceremony.

"You're here because you've been actively following your dreams," she said. "As Albert Einstein once said, 'Imagination is more important than knowledge.'

"Now, I wouldn't want to quarrel with Albert Einstein, but I am willing to bet that when it comes to productive dreams, imagination and knowledge go hand in hand."

Walker, who was one of the first artists to employ new technologies to quilting, pointed out that modern technology means "There are no limits for the inquisitive mind."

"It is choice, not chance, that determines destiny; so my advice is, when you are fashioning your dreams, choose carefully."

She carried a special message for

women, as well, to demonstrate her point.

Walker said she is a product of the Second World War, and the choices for women were essentially limited to living as a homemaker or learning office skills.

"Most families neither budgeted for, nor even thought about, their daughters going to university. In addition, there was a preconceived notion among a great many male professionals and bureaucrats that females didn't know much, and so little credence need be given to their ideas," she said.

"Arthur Wallace Calhoun, in the early 20th century, said, 'A woman's name should appear in print only twice: once when she marries and once when she dies.'"

That sexism was often thrown in her way when she entered the art world, she said. As president of the Canadian Quilters' Association, she once had a meeting with the director of the Ontario Arts Council, who said, "I just wanted to see if the president of the Canadian Quilters' Association was another one of those grey-haired old ladies."

She was getting the double whammy, Walker said: sexism and the belief that her chosen art was not an art at all.

Nevertheless, she kept her mind on

her dreams and now is recognized for her work as an artist.

The ceremony also featured another artist: graduate Jacelyn Holmes, who received the Spirit of Brock award.

---

The 23-year-old dramatic arts student received special recognition from the university for her academic work and contribution to life at the school.

"Art is life!" she declared after receiving her award, which is given to one student who is deemed to embody the spirit of Sir Isaac Brock by inspiring other students.

David Howes, the chairman of the board of trustees at Brock, said Holmes founded the Gimmie2Festival, which helps welcome first-year dramatic arts students to the university community as well as engaging them in their craft.

"First-year students are not allowed to take part in any productions, so this was a way to get them involved with two-minute performances, so they can have some experience," Holmes said.

Holmes, who said she still trying to figure out exactly where she wants to focus her post-university career, is rehearsing for the play *Albertine in Five Times*, which opens at the Sullivan Mahoney Courthouse Theatre on Nov. 8.

The Port Dalhousie resident said she is the first woman in her family to graduate from university.

"It just makes this day even more special," she said.

---

Copyright © 2008 St. Catharines Standard