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## 267th CONVOCAATION

# Graduates have treasures at their fingertips

Before setting out into a world of crisis, some of Western's most recent graduates were asked to contemplate the treasures they already possess.

"You have at least seven treasures at your fingertips," humanities scholar Eva Kushner told graduates from the Faculties of Arts and Science and from Brescia, Huron and King's Colleges at Autumn Convocation ceremonies October 24. "Each one deserves many lectures, but I'll only mention them briefly and let your own imaginations take over."

Kushner, one of the founders of the discipline of comparative literature in Canada, received a Doctor of Letters degree for her contributions to scholarship and administration in the humanities. The seven treasures she outlined were:

**Your Mind:** "All during your college education, and throughout all the years of your education given by your family and your primary and secondary schooling, your mind has been learning to solve problems, make

it in this competitive world."  
**Your Country:** "Our country is a treasure, as long as we also agree that treasures can be funny, clumsy, formless, heterogeneous and undervalued. As long as we remain clear sighted . . . about reconciling in our minds and our community lives the claims of our national identity vis-a-vis our cultural identity and how to give each its due in the civil society that binds us together."

**Those You Love:** "You don't need me to remind you that they are the greatest treasure - as long as you also love and respect that self of yours which is part of your loved ones as they are part of you."

**Your Self:** "And, finally, there is that unique, inalienable self which you possess or which you regard as God's trust to you if you are religiously minded."

Life is essentially not fair, said Kushner, as the self must deal with an enormous weight of determinants such as gender, time, place, race, ethnicity, poverty or wealth, health or disease, conflict or peace.

and researcher, she was appointed President of Victoria University at the University of Toronto in 1987 - becoming the first woman president of an Ontario university.

Born in Prague, Kushner received her secondary school education in France during the Second World War. Arriving in Canada in 1946, she completed her university education at McGill and graduated with a PhD in 1956. She taught at Carleton and McGill universities before her appointment as President of Victoria University.

In his degree citation Prof. Calin-Andrei Mihailescu, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, noted that Kushner was also being honored as a researcher of international fame who has written or edited more than 20 volumes.

"She published a scary number of texts on contemporary French literature, Quebec poetry, Renaissance studies, and Comparative Literature," said



Humanities scholar Dr. Eva Kushner addresses Convocation