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President's Speech

Alumni of Distinction Awards 2020 (December 3)

Thank you Sam, and good evening. Kwe. Bonsoir.

It is my honour to be with you to celebrate tonight's distinguished group of alumni. I want to offer a special virtual welcome to our distinguished guests, members of our Board of Governors, the Students' Association Board of Directors, and our Alumni Advisory Committee.

While we are not able gather in person for our traditional awards gala, this celebration itself is more important than ever.

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During a year in which our connections to one another have been tested like never before, we celebrate the connections that make Algonquin College strong and vibrant.

This is the fourth time we have recognized our Alumni of Distinction and our list of possible award recipients keeps growing.

We received 100 nominations from the College community this year – an impressive snapshot of the vast number of talented and community-minded alumni who are making a difference across the globe. In fact, at our fall virtual Convocation ceremonies, the College celebrated our 200,000th graduate.

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This year's Alumni of Distinction range from an Olympic medalist to one of our own department Chairs. They include changemakers in the fields of mental health, health and emergency services, innovators in education and e-commerce and trendsetters in the creative and culinary arts.

While they come from countless backgrounds and studies, and now work in a wide range of different fields, we are able to find common links among their different paths.

We celebrate the dynamic ties that join them to the Algonquin College community, but also the connections they have fostered in their own communities – wide and far.

Our honourees are members of their local chambers and sit on various boards and committees. They donate their time to support small businesses and mentor those up-and-coming in their respective fields. They support women's initiatives, support marginalized and equity-seeking groups, support children causes and various other important charitable organizations. They donate money, donate their expertise and lead by example. Throughout their personal and professional lives, they live our College values of Caring, Learning, Integrity and Respect.

Our Alumni of Distinction developed deep roots and connections as learners here at the College, and when they graduated, they embraced those connections, shared them – and made new associations within their new communities.

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They have made their communities stronger with their presence and with the work that they do.

This year's cohort of award recipients are shining examples of paying it forward, building communities, life-long learning ... and life-long leadership. They represent the best of us. They are part of a thriving, interconnected community who are proud Algonquin alumni.

Here at the College, one of the things we pride ourselves on, is the deep, meaningful connections our students are able to form with faculty, peers, and within the business community of their chosen fields of study.

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Through the help of our alumni, each of our programs have a network of business connections that help our graduates make professional links of their own. These relationships allow for opportunities to flourish and doors to open.

We are so proud of ALL our alumni. The achievements of this year's Alumni of Distinction are truly a reflection of the impact all our graduates are making at home and abroad.

Clearly, our award recipients have thrived since gracing the halls of our campus. Once it is safe to do so, we hope to welcome them – and all of you – back to campus to further mark their achievements.

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Again, thank you for joining us.

Miigwetch. Thank you. Merci Beaucoup.