

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2008 Honourary Fellow bestowed upon Dr. John Thompson

Calgary, AB (June 28, 2008) – Dr. John Thompson, one of St. Mary's earliest supporters and interim president in its formative years, was today named Honourary Fellow of St. Mary's University College at the 2008 Convocation.

Dr. Thompson was recognized for his outstanding contributions to scholarship as interim president of what was then St. Mary's College from 1992 to 1994. Under his leadership, one of the most critical decisions made in 1994 was that St. Mary's should forego all further attempts to affiliate with the University of Calgary and become a free standing institution, open to all, offering a liberal arts and sciences program and committed to the synthesis of faith and reason. St. Mary's became a degree-granting institution in 2004 and is now St. Mary's University College.

"That decision was an enormous breakthrough as the Board of Governors had been stalled in its efforts to establish a vibrant college since 1986 when it had received its charter from the Alberta Legislature," said Yolande Gagnon, past Chair of the Board of Governors. "Following this decision, the Board and Dr. Thompson took the necessary steps to establish the college and began offering certificate and transfer programs by 1997."

"Dr. Thompson is a man of abiding faith, vision and generosity," added Dr. Terry Downey, President of St. Mary's University College. "St. Mary's is proud to recognize his scholarship and his contributions to higher education and, in particular, to his vision for St. Mary's University College."

Dr. Thompson holds MA and PhD degrees (Sociology) from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a MA degree (Theology) from the University of Santa Clara. He was a professor of sociology at the University of Saskatchewan and St. Thomas More College from 1975 to 2005 and is currently Professor Emeritus. Dr. Thompson was President of St. Thomas More College from 1990 to 2000. He has received several awards acknowledging his distinguished teaching career including a Master Teacher Award from the University of Saskatchewan and a 3M Teaching Fellowship from the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

By naming honorary fellows, St. Mary's honours those individuals who have distinguished themselves by significant and sustained commitment to the building of the university college through teaching and/or research, distinguished service on the Board of Governors, Academic Council, or donors of major gifts to the university college, and/or someone who exemplifies in his/her career and volunteering service to the greater community, the values, principles and vision of St. Mary's University College.

About St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College is a Catholic post-secondary, student-focused liberal arts and sciences teaching and research institution in Calgary. St. Mary's offers Bachelor of Arts degrees and courses in 27 academic disciplines. For more information, visit www.stmu.ab.ca.

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