

In this pursuit of the universal, we must not forget that every university has its own distinctive surroundings and acquires its character from a given culture and historic tradition, and from specific economic, political and religious structures. Thus it has a social function, and its very destiny tends to become intertwined with that of the society that it must serve. It must live in the public eye and above all must determine the extent and the manner in which it will participate in the life of the society whose hopes and plans must, without exception, have a solid intellectual foundation to rest on.

More so than others, Acadian society needs this intellectual foundation. As the world famous writer Antonine Maillet wrote, "Acadia is a country that is situated in time rather than in space. We have no physical homeland. To be an Acadian means that you have a certain lineage; not that you live in a certain place."

The last frontier today is the mind. The mind is a boundless land of promise. No longer is it just a question of safeguarding the French language or the Catholic faith, or of holding in check a people that is living dangerously. No, today's goal is to gain mastery over all of reality - in a word, to build a strong society.

A strong society - that is an understatement! Let it be said clearly: there is only one way that Acadian society can take, and that is the way of excellence. We francophones make up barely three per cent of the population of North America. We live right next door to the world's most powerful industrial giant, and are in the most homogeneous part of the Western Hemisphere. The love for our heritage must not yield to the temptation of defeatism and powerlessness or, worse yet, to that of pawning off our misfortunes onto others. No, Ladies and Gentlemen, the love for our heritage, in 1982, demands that each and every one of us choose the way of excellence, or all will be nothing more than a flight of fancy. It is the most demanding way, but it is also the only one that can lead to concrete truth.