



## **King's to award honorary degrees to former Premier of Nova Scotia Darrell Dexter and esteemed classics scholar Emily Wilson**

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The University of King's College will award two distinguished individuals with honorary degrees at its 235<sup>th</sup> Encaenia on May 29, 2025. The recipients are acclaimed Homeric scholar and translator Dr. Emily Wilson and Darrell Dexter, who served as the 27<sup>th</sup> Premier of Nova Scotia.

### **Darrell Dexter**



With a career that spans journalism, law, military service and public service, Darrell Dexter is best known for leading the first and, to date, only New Democratic Party government in Atlantic Canada's history (from 2009 to 2013).

Dexter led Nova Scotia's NDP for 12 years, from 2001 to 2013. As Premier, he earned praise for launching a renewable energy strategy, advancing progressive social policy, controlling spending and reducing small business taxes. He received a Climate Leadership in Canada award for overseeing new environmental policies at the 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. As Chair of the Council of the Federation from 2012 to 2013, Darrell worked on key initiatives such as leading an economic trade mission to China, establishing the Pan-Canadian Pharmaceutical Alliance and improving the flow of inter-provincial trade.

Before entering public life, Dexter served in the Canadian Forces, holding the rank of Sub-Lieutenant and serving aboard HMCS Yukon and HMCS Qu'Appelle while deployed with Maritime Forces Pacific.

Dexter worked as a reporter for the Daily News in the early 1980s before starting his law practice. He was a Dartmouth city councillor from 1994 to 1996 and was first elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour in 1988.

In his work as an elected official, party leader, leader of Nova Scotia's official opposition and Premier, Dexter engaged in critical issues related to energy and resource development, transportation, healthcare, the environment, infrastructure and the economy.

Dexter holds bachelor's degrees in arts and journalism from the University of King's College and degrees in education and law from Dalhousie University, where he is now an Honorary Distinguished Fellow with the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance.

He was a National Democratic Institute Co-head of Mission for election observation in Tunisia in 2015 for both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections and served as a member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe election observation team in 2019.

Currently, he is a Vice Chair of Global Public Affairs, a firm that provides government relations and strategic communications services.

Upon bestowing this honorary degree on Dexter, King's will become the first university to celebrate the public service of its graduates by conferring honorary degrees to Premiers of Nova Scotia from each of the three major political parties. The college has also awarded honorary degrees to King's alumni Dr. Russell MacLellan (Liberal Premier of Nova Scotia from 1997 to 1999) and Dr. John Hamm (Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia from 1999 to 2006).

## Dr. Emily Wilson



Photo: Paul Adams

Dr. Emily Wilson's English translation of Homer's *The Odyssey* was released in 2018 to huge acclaim, followed by her translation of *The Iliad* in 2023, cementing her reputation as one of today's preeminent classical scholars and translators.

Wilson is currently Department Chair and Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where she holds the College for Women Class of 1963 Term Professor in the Humanities position. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in classics at Oxford University's Balliol College and her Master of Philosophy in renaissance English literature at Oxford's Corpus Christi College before earning her PhD in classics and comparative literature from Yale University.

She received a 2019 MacArthur Fellowship for her work bringing classical literature to new audiences and a 2020 Guggenheim Fellowship to support her work on *The Iliad*.

Critics laud Wilson for using lyrical poetic language that invites reading out loud. Her work brings to life Homer's epic poems with their resonant themes of honour, politics, conflict, mortality, love and loss for a new audience, one that extends well beyond academic circles. Wilson's translation of *The Odyssey* was named one of *the New York Times*' 100 notable books of 2018 and was shortlisted for the 2018 National Translation Award. Her translation of *The Iliad* has been included in several "Best Books of 2023" lists by publications including *the New York Times*, *the Atlantic*, *the Washington Post*, *Time Magazine* and *the Guardian*.

She has also published translations of Euripides, Sophocles and Seneca and is the author of several scholarly works, including *Mocked with Death: Tragic Overliving from Sophocles to Milton* (2004), *The Death of Socrates: Hero, Villain, Chatterbox, Saint* (2007) and *The Greatest Empire: A Life of Seneca* (2014).

In March 2024, Wilson visited King's to give the 10th Alex Fountain Memorial Lecture, "Re-Translating Homer: Why it Matters," where she spoke about her approach to translation as an act bound by culture that seeks to bridge worlds. King's students chose her for the honour, and the event filled Alumni Hall to capacity. After the event, Wilson posted about her visit to King's and the King's Co-op Bookstore on social media: "I was moved to visit many brilliant @ukings students in beautiful drizzle-grey Halifax, all so excited about Homer & great books & a better world. Lovely to...visit the iconic fold-up dream-house bookshop. What an amazing community!"

We look forward to welcoming Dexter and Wilson back to King's for the conferring of these honorary degrees during Encaenia, a ceremony rooted in the traditions of Oxford that has been a King's tradition since its founding.

### **About the University of King's College**

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university and is associated with Dalhousie University. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax (Kjipuktuk), Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities, including its renowned Foundation Year Program, its professional programs in journalism and its fine arts programs in creative writing.  
[ukings.ca](http://ukings.ca)

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