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Martin Parnell headlines as speaker at University's 27th Annual International Dinner

Running international marathons, he has raised millions and instilled hope

He'd been called crazy even before he decided to run a marathon in Afghanistan in a quest to fight for women's rights and gender equality. Martin Parnell never let that stop him, and over the course of time, his efforts raised millions of dollars and gave the gift of hope to people all over the world.

Parnell will bring his "Finish the Race Attitude" to the University of Lethbridge on February 25, for the 27th Annual International Dinner. The evening features an array of international foods from LA Chefs, a silent auction in support of the International Students' Emergency Bursary and a featured talk from Parnell as he details his Afghanistan adventure along with a myriad of quests that have impacted children throughout the world.



"We're thrilled to bring a speaker of Martin's calibre in for our dinner. His message of perseverance, hope and a willingness to give of yourself to benefit society is so important in today's world," says Diane Minamide, education abroad coordinator – incoming, for U of L International. "His impact on the international community is immeasurable and worth celebrating."

Parnell talks about helping people set goals, overcoming obstacles and achieving outstanding results.

In 2010, following a 25-year mining career, Parnell started his Quests for Kids initiative. Over the next five years, he completed 10 quests, including 250 marathons in one year, setting five Guinness World Records and summiting Mount Kilimanjaro in 21 hours. At

the end of 2014, over \$1.3 million had been raised for the humanitarian organization Right To Play and 27,000 children had been given the gift of hope.

Parnell was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in October 2012. In January 2013, he was named one of the Calgary Herald's 20 Compelling Calgarians.

He has written a trilogy of books detailing his marathon exploits, beginning with *Marathon Quest* in 2014. He followed that up with *Running to the Edge* in 2016, and then released the final book, *The Secret Marathon – Empowering Women and Girls in Afghanistan through Sport*, in 2018. A documentary, *The Secret Marathon*, was released in Fall 2019.

The 27th Annual International Dinner will be held in the Science Commons main atrium at the University of Lethbridge on Tuesday, Feb. 25. Tickets are \$75 each (\$50 for students) and are available by contacting international@uleth.ca or visiting the International web page uleth.ca/international. Tickets may also be purchased at the Scotiabank West Lethbridge Branch (Towne Centre, 550 University Dr. W.).

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/martin-parnell-headlines-speaker-27th-annual-international-dinner>

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