

Wolfson

CHARGE TO THE CLASS
REGIONAL CAMPUS COMMENCEMENTS

TRADITION PROVIDES THAT NOW THE PRESIDENT OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY MAY INTERRUPT THIS CEREMONY FOR A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH YOU, THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS.

YES . . . THERE IS ONE MORE LECTURE TO ENDURE BEFORE WE GIVE YOU THE DEGREES. BUT IT'S SHORT AND I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU HEAR IT.

YOU SEE, YOU AND I, ARE NOT HERE FOR THE SAME REASONS TODAY.

YOU ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. ALL OF YOU HAVE GIVEN YEARS, AND SOME OF YOU THE WHOLE OF YOUR LIVES TO EDUCATION. TODAY IS ONE OF THE GREAT DIVIDES IN YOUR LIVES. YOU LEAVE OFF BEING OUR STUDENTS . . . AND BECOME OUR ALUMNI. WELL, WHAT YOU HAVE DONE IS WORTH CELEBRATING . . . AND WE CONGRATULATE YOU FOR YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT THE REST OF US CELEBRATE TODAY. ALL OF US -- YOUR TEACHERS, YOUR FAMILIES, YOUR FRIENDS ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE WHAT YOU BECOME TODAY AND WILL DO TOMORROW. WE CELEBRATE YOUR FUTURE. THAT'S WHY WE CALL IT COMMENCEMENT, I SUPPOSE, AND NOT GRADUATION. THE REST OF US ARE LOOKING AHEAD. THROUGH YOU, WE ARE LOOKING FOR OUR FUTURE.

NOW, HERE IS WHAT WE WOULD HAVE YOU REMEMBER FROM TODAY.

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FIRST OF ALL, WE DO SALUTE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. BUT REMEMBER ALWAYS . . . YOU DO NOT COME TO US TODAY ENTIRELY ON YOUR OWN RESOURCES, TALENTS, AND LABORS. REMEMBER YOUR TEACHERS, YOUR FAMILIES, AND YOUR FRIENDS -- BECAUSE TODAY, YOU ARE ALSO THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT. AND BEYOND THEM IS AN ENTIRE SOCIETY WHICH HAS MADE THIS UNIVERSITY AND KEPT IT HERE FOR YOUR EDUCATIONS.

WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR DEGREE TODAY, REMEMBER YOU DO NOT LEAVE HERE ALONE.

SECOND, DO NOT THINK THAT WHAT WE DO TODAY MEANS YOU ARE FINISHED WITH THE WORK OF STUDENTS. WHAT WE HAVE TAUGHT YOU HERE WILL NOT SERVE YOU THROUGH THE REST OF YOUR LIVES. NEXT YEAR, EVEN, THERE WILL BE MATERIAL IN THE CURRICULA WHICH WAS NOT THERE THIS YEAR, FOR YOU TO LEARN.

DON'T EVER FORGET THAT THE TIDE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE CONTINUES TO FLOW . . . AND WE WILL BE GIVING THAT NEW KNOWLEDGE TO THE MEN AND WOMEN COMING BEHIND YOU HERE. IF YOU WANT TO STAY AHEAD OF WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING, YOU MUST KEEP LEARNING.

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SO, AS YOU LEAVE HERE TODAY, I COMMEND YOUR ATTENTION TO OUR CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS. AND, YOU MUST CONTINUE TO READ. YOU MUST CONTINUE TO LISTEN. YOU MUST CONTINUE TO STUDY AND LEARN, OR THE DEGREES YOU TAKE TODAY WILL SOON DIMINISH IN VALUE FOR YOU . . . AND FOR US.

THIRD, YOU NEED NOT -- AND YOU MUST NOT -- LEAVE HERE JUST AS THE PRACTITIONER OF THE DISCIPLINE OR PROFESSION NOTED ON YOUR DIPLOMAS. BE PROUD OF YOUR PROFESSION, AND YOUR ROLE IN SERVING SOCIETY THROUGH YOUR HIGHER EDUCATION.

BUT REMEMBER THAT THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN THAT. IF WE ONLY WANTED TO TRAIN YOU IN SOME SKILL OR CAREER, THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO DO IT THAN THE UNIVERSITIES HAVE FOUND. BUT WE MEAN INSTEAD THAT YOU GO INTO THE WORLD AS EDUCATED AND USEFUL CITIZENS IN YOUR COMMUNITIES. YOUR DIPLOMAS FROM THIS UNIVERSITY MEAN THAT YOU MAY NOW BE GIVEN THE HIGHEST RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP. THE HIGHEST, AND THE HEAVIEST.

AS I SAID, THAT IS WHY WE CALL THIS A COMMENCEMENT. AND NOW YOU MAY UNDERSTAND MORE FULLY WHY WE SO HAPPILY SHARE YOUR CELEBRATION TODAY. THERE IS IMPORTANT WORK FOR YOU TO DO TOMORROW . . . ACCEPT MY PERSONAL BEST WISHES TO EACH OF YOU, AND LET US PROCEED WITH THESE CEREMONIES.