

Thank you, Jessica for that very kind and gracious introduction, and congratulations on your accomplishment today.

I would like to thank the faculty and administration for the invitation to speak to you and address the graduating class. I was humbled, honored, slightly skeptical, and terrified by the invitation. I first asked if they had the right person; I then checked to see if this was a cyber threat or identify theft scam; but then I realized I was being asked to address my alma mater's graduating class. So, I take this with great privilege and I also promise not to over do it.

It was in May of 1986, 32 years ago, that I sat at the steps of Plant Hall preparing and listening to George Steinbrenner deliver my commencement address. If you aren't sure who he is – he most notably was known as the polarizing owner of the New York Yankees baseball team. He was a winner and demanded much from his organizations. He also was a business leader in Tampa Gulf Coast shipping industry. His wiki doesn't state he was an alumnus but rumors had it his children were. His message was entertaining I remember, probably somewhat motivating, but I don't remember the specifics.

I sat there 32 years ago as you are today. I'm not sure how you are feeling today but I was uncertain of what my next steps were. I had spent four years at The University. In those four years, I experienced the uncertainty of orientation and that first year; surviving the "Animal Wing" of McKay Hall; awarded Freshman Chemistry Student of the year; eating all of those "delicious" meals in the student union; many classes, test, and labs in the science wing with Dr. Punzo, Winkler, Ford, Price, and Gude; discussing literature with Dr. Locke and Stewart; and social issues with Kerstein; epic frisbee matches on the intra-mural

field; many nights in the Rat; visiting crew teams; Gasparilla events, two years as an RA in Delo Hall; scuba lessons in the pool; water skiing events on the BIOS with Dr. Ellison in the bay; and many more experiences and lifetime friendships. I remember a day when walking to lab, because science majors always work harder than business degrees – a van of friends pulled next to me right in front of Plant Hall and pulled into a van and we headed to the Clearwater. I was just kidnapped. I explained that I needed to get to lab, my friends asked “what will you remember in 20 years: going to that lab or going to the beach with friends?” They were right- I remember that beach.

The things that I knew – the things that I had that day 32 years ago were one: the lessons from my family. The strong work ethic they instilled in me to work hard and harder than the next person, to be honest, and to stand up for what you believe. Secondly, I had the education and experiences from the four years at this University: The University of Tampa! In those four years this institution provided me the foundation and the confidence to experience life and take risks. It provided me with the confidence to reinvent myself if needed in the rapidly changing world. It gave me the confidence to just go “do”.

Since I left UT that day 32 years ago, I went to graduate school; I published a thesis and articles; I’ve written software; I have done TV, radio, and print editorials; I married my best friend and she and I raised two wonderful children; I have developed policy and discussed issues with members of Congress, Governors, Foreign Dignitaries, Cabinets members, and US Presidents; I have worked on response teams to disasters, national risks, and acts of terrorism; I have been involved with start-up’s some successful and some unsuccessful; I have negotiated and done business with CEO’s of many the Fortune 500

companies; I've traveled to many countries, states, regions, and experienced cultures; I have had the pleasure to lunch with Pulitzer Prize winners, best-selling authors, and political talking-heads; I've discussed strategy with Military leaders, astronauts, and a Nobel Prize winner; I have been a coach, a friend, a husband, and a father; I tried to do; I have tried to do it well, learn fast, and find my passions, never afraid to reinvent myself when necessary.

The foundation to experience life and take risks is what this wonderful institution, The University of Tampa, provided me in those four years. Those four years changed my life and thinking. It prepared me for the things, the experiences, that would happen to me over the next 32 years and hopefully more to come. I don't think I'm done.

This is what you have today. A strong foundation for you to experience life and to build on for the rest of your lives. You've made relationships and you have started your networks. Now go do!

There are a few certainties in life. First, when you say you went to UT people will ask Tennessee or Texas based on where you are. I respond with, "No, Tampa." Second, when you say you are a Spartan, they'll say Michigan State and again I say, "No, The University of Tampa," again with pride. Third certainty is, easy wins. Look for the simple solutions and simplicity. It's the winning formula. Lastly, there really are no guarantees, so put yourself in the position you want; to achieve what you want; and I will tell you, you are prepared. Go out and do. Experience the rest of your life.

Go to graduate school; go to medical school; be a health care provider; start that business; be a CEO; volunteer; write that book; start your military career; marry that partner; raise that family; work from home;

work abroad; embrace your faith; travel the world; take some time off; start your career; start a movement; change the world. But please go do. Go experience things, experience life, and have a passion.

I mentioned I was a father. It's the best experience and honor I will ever have. I had the opportunity to watch my daughter walk and receive her diploma two years ago; sorry UT, she was not a "legacy" she's a Colorado girl. In closing, I would like to share the note I gave her on her graduation:

"Emily,

Today I could not be prouder of you. I know you may have a lot of questions and uncertainty about what happens now. You may be afraid and scared, and I wish I could make it go away as I have tried in the past, but on this I cannot. This is your adventure and is yours to figure out, and oh how excited I am to see where it takes you.

I know you aren't asking for advice but I am your DAD so here are just a few:

1. Never sacrifice your faith and your beliefs. In the worst times they will comfort you, and people will respect what and who you are.
2. Never discount your reputation. It's about trust and it's the one thing you will earn and own - and it is yours alone.
3. Your family will frustrate you but they will be there when you need them. Don't give up on them. This is a special bond.
4. Take risks. Please! Take them when you are young and don't look back. You have time and you are strong.
5. Pay it back later and take risks on other people. Sure, some will fall short and let you down but people want to be a part of great

things, great movements, and great people and you are in that group of great people.

I love you, Em, and I can't wait for the great things that you will experience and accomplish. Change the world." Dad.

And to The University of Tampa's Graduating Class of 2018, I cannot wait for the great things, accomplishments, and experiences that I will see from you. Go do! Change the world! Congratulations on a great accomplishment. Go UT. Go - The University of Tampa. Go Spartans, and go the Class of 2018!

Thank you.