COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

FOR

ROBERT REGAN

Hello everyone! It is such a privilege to be here with all of you today, celebrating this year’s graduates, the Class of 2013 of Mount Wachusett Community College. Today is even more special as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first graduating class of this fine school. It is so great to be back and to see familiar faces and new ones; family, friends, faculty and all of you distinguished guests. It was a great honor to be invited to speak today, and I promise you, if **anyone** had **ever** told me that I would be returning twenty four years later, let alone to speak at your commencement ceremony, I don’t think I would have ever really believed or envisioned it, and **THAT**, my friends, is a simple yet really meaningful demonstration of the power of determination, gratitude, and appreciation for education and wisdom! I also have to say that being invited to speak by, and seeing Dean Vincent Ialenti is pretty special as well. Dean Ialenti was my first professor when I got to this school, and here we are, and here **HE** is. From Professor to Dean…(**turn to him and say**), Dean Ialenti, you did good!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). All jokes aside, Dean Ialenti is also a testament to hard work and complete dedication to his students. I know that I would not have had the determination and drive to allow myself to be challenged to succeed if it weren’t for the inspiration I received from teachers like this fine man.

There was an old commercial that ran in New York many years ago. It was actually a commercial to advertise the New York State Lotto, but the tagline resonates with my early story. It simply stated, “All you need is a dollar and a dream.” That’s exactly what it took to move me-literally, to my classes. Back in 1973, many of my contemporaries were the first generation in their respective families to attend college, and there I was, Robert Regan, a young Irish kid who wanted an education. I began my ‘stint” at Wachusetts in style- I took that dollar and bought a neighbor’s 1965 Buick Special because I knew, some way, somehow, I had to get to school. I really was hungry to learn. Okay-sounds glamorous, no? In truth, the car had four wheels and a steering wheel. No power steering, and okay, a little bit of the floor was missing, but that’s the way we rolled in those days. I like to think of it as my “Fred Flintstone years.” (**Wait for the laugh**).