**14874, James Fabiano II**

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you Keith for that wonderful introduction and for the invitation for me to speak today. I am honored to be here today celebrating this wonderful occasion with all of you. I want to welcome our graduates, our family and friends and the school’s staff and faculty to the graduation ceremony today.

First, let me say Congratulations to all of you! You all should be very proud of what you have accomplished. Take this degree that all of you will soon be holding in your hand and use it to begin your future! All of you right now.... Take a deep breath.... Slowdown and enjoy this brief moment in your life.

Yes it's been four years to get to this point but speaking from experience in the blink of an eye you will all be wondering: Where has all the time gone? How did life go by so fast? Did I accomplish what I wanted in my life? Start your bucket list now, and as you grow not only in age but in wisdom, change, add, and delete on your bucket list those things that are important to you.

Yes, this is your day. You’ve worked hard, so enjoy it along with your family and friends! Please, all of you, just take a minute and look around at all the people who are here to support you. You're not alone out there in this world. Pay attention to these people who are here. They are here because they love you and want to enjoy your accomplishments with you. Slow down and enjoy the moment. You have One Life to live. This is not a dress rehearsal. Everything happens for a reason. Take what this dedicated faculty has taught you and make the best of the opportunities that are about to come your way tomorrow and beyond! This is your day. You have earned it. Enjoy this moment!

Would the graduates here today please do something for me? Will all of you please stand? Now, would you please give this faculty standing behind me standing ovation? They have prepared you for what lies ahead. They have dedicated many years to all of you to get you to where you are today. Don't be afraid of change. I think millennial's are getting a bad reputation as being lazy and not motivated not driven. But I see just the opposite. I have children who are millennial's and I have a lot of employees who are millennial's and I believe this group seems to be driven. You seem to be hard workers. You seem to want to help and you care not only about yourself but the well beings of others. You not only care about your job and education but you care about the environment and the world we live in. You have good qualities. As millennial's, don't let others out there put you down just because they're afraid of the changes you will all make in the world we live in today.

Tom Brokaw said, “You are educated. Your certification is in your degree. You may think of it as the ticket to the good life. Let me ask you to think of an alternative. Think of it as your ticket to change the world.” Starting today, you have the potential to do whatever you want with your education as your down payment. Regardless of your field of study, you can go out and choose whatever field of work you love and make a difference. You can create a new business. You can invent a new tool. You can write the Great American Novel. Whatever it is, your education is one tool in your toolbox. It’s an important one. In many ways, without your college degree there are doors that would forever remain closed to you. But, with it, you can go out into the world and do great things.

Going to college accomplished many things for you. Yes you earned a college degree. But, you also learned about life. You grew up to a certain extent. You learned more about yourself than you thought possible. You learned how to stand on your own two feet so that now you can go out of here and choose what direction you will follow. Yes, you may ask your parents’ input, but you don’t have to do exactly what they say. Not that they wouldn’t give you good direction, but you’re not a child anymore. You also learned while you were here that there are consequences to your actions so you’re more careful about your actions, at least we hope you are.

Some of you graduating today already have your next step all lined up. You may be going on for your master’s degree. You may be entering the military or joining a corporation. Regardless of which direction you are heading, today is the ending of one season in your life and the beginning of a new one. That’s why they call it commencement. You are commencing something new. I know you are all very excited for whatever it is that you’ll be commencing. You’re probably sitting there thinking, “Gee, I wish this speaker would hurry up and finish so I can get on with my life.” You are, aren’t you?

Just remember that you are all talented and skilled in unique ways. Even those of you who graduated with the same college degree, you will do different things with that degree. You are unique individuals. Robert Orben said, “A graduation ceremony is an event where the commencement speaker tells thousands of students dressed in identical caps and gowns that 'individuality' is the key to success.” But, as soon as this ceremony is over you will all reach up and turn your tassel. A little while later, after your friends and family are done with all their pictures, you will get out of your caps and gowns just as quickly as possible. Thus will begin your unique journey to becoming whoever it is you are meant to be.

Good luck to each and every one of you. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to all of you it was truly an honor and I wish all of you the best.