JIM DORNAN

Hello everyone!! I’d like to congratulate those of you that are graduating today, and to **all** of you, I want you to know that it’s great to be back here at Temple University. I’d like to thank Dean Porat for giving me the opportunity to speak to you on this wonderful occasion. It’s great to see all of you here and to remember what it was like when I attended Temple. Although I graduated almost thirty years ago and have had many interesting and challenging experiences throughout my life, it is very gratifying for me to be able to return to the environment where I gained such a priceless foundation and education. This University prepared me so well for the rigors of the world of business and life I will remain forever grateful. I believe that as we propel ourselves forward in life, it’s essential every once in a while to take a look back , acknowledge where we’ve been while recounting the lessons learned, as we focus on the path that lies ahead.

Each one of us brings our unique perspectives and talents to any situation , and in the professional world, the more I experienced, the happier I was to have had the opportunity to attend the Fox School of Business. I am not the kind of person that easily speaks of my accomplishments. Instead, I prefer to acknowledge the mentors and influences I have had in my life that have encouraged me to find the common sense, curiosity and wherewithal within myself to succeed in this world. In fact, I have vivid memories of Statistics 101 and Dr. Singh who didn’t just teach a class, he made sure we understood the concepts inside and out. I can’t tell you what a difference that made for me over my business career , He along with so many others at this University helped me become “ Temple Made “ . I encourage each one of you to use your education and insights to identify and attain the goals you set for yourselves in life.

I along with all Temple alumni stand with each one of you as you set out on your unique course in life. The truth is that in the professional world, in order to be considered as special, one has to be willing to do special and even extraordinary things and each one of you is capable of doing special things and achieving **YOUR** goals. It takes many facets to be successful including a strong education which we **KNOW** you have, in addition common sense, focus, dedication, and resilience along with a strong sense of self-confidence. You would not be sitting here today if you did not possess all of these attributes.

You’ve gotten through your course work and you’ve made it this far. You are standing on the precipice of your ultimate inheritance-and the professional world and the rest of your lives are right **out there**-right on the other side of that door (**Make a gesture to indicate the exit**). It is now up to **YOU** to choose how to live your lives. I must warn you however, that there will invariably be people you meet on your journey that I would call “doomsayers” but I want to encourage you to focus on the positive. If someone tries to discourage you, remember that attitude is **THEIR PROBLEM**-and **NOT** yours. Keep your eye on your goal whatever that may be, envision the completion of each goal set and keep moving forward . Doomsayers may ask you “Why?” when you discuss your dreams and ambitions. Remember the best response is “**WHY NOT**?” If they don’t believe, that’s THEIR problem. I believe the streets of America and the world are still paved with gold- you just have to know where to look for it, remain positive, don’t succumb to negativity or ambivalence, and don’t rest on your laurels.

 I’ve learned many lessons over the years and I want to share a couple with you that I think were particularly impactful for me. As I said earlier, if you want to be special, make sure you do special things. Be **present** in **all** facets of your life. Really take an interest in what you’re doing. Find your passion and pursue what you love doing everyday ask yourself, “What can I be learning today?” I promise you, your education **NEVER STOPS**. We’re placed here on earth to learn and then to share that knowledge with others so we can make the world a better place. As you focus on your career, think of the lessons you’re learning and watch how your knowledge base evolves. Believe in what you do and be ready to defend what you believe in. Never forget that organizations will always value those who “Think.” A very wise senior executive at one of the largest Financial Services Organizations taught me early on in my career, Remember- you are paid to “ think .‘“ The more thoroughly you think through a problem or an opportunity and the more refined your thought process, the greater the odds will be of success. A few years back someone asked me at a conference what I attribute my success too, and naturally I said first and foremost, Temple University. But second I learned early on to “Do what I was supposed to do when I was supposed to do it, whether I felt like it or not.” That’s the essence of a true professional. Show up. Bring the best thinking you can muster, be bold and be willing to do what others won’t. I promise you this is a formula for success in business and life.

I hope I’ve given you some food for thought. I want to thank all of you for inspiring me and reminding me what it was like as I walked off into the professional world from my own graduation at Temple University and I have to say, it has been an incredible ride. I want to extend my most sincere congratulations to each one of you. The adrenalin and enthusiasm in this room is palpable. Take this moment with you and go out and stake your claim in the world. Continue to learn and always remember to focus on the future while doing your best in the present. The future belongs to you right now, time passes quickly so savor every moment and learn from the good times and the challenging times that are truly our **BEST teachers**. I look forward to learning of your continued achievements and I hope to see you again and enjoy each other’s stories of adventures in business and in life. Congratulations! Go make us proud!! Thank you all!