

Commencement Welcome--JJD (5/4/91)

It is an honor to welcome the President of the United States, George Bush and First Lady, Barbara Bush; Governor John Engler and Mrs. Engler; 1991 graduates and their families; and all the Michigan kin--faculty, students, staff, alumni and friends-- to this historic University of Michigan 1991 Spring Commencement.

Let me also welcome you to the first event held in the "new" Michigan Stadium with its lowered field and new "customized athletic turf." It might feel a bit hard. This is due to the computerized pipes and valves installed underneath. From now on we will be adjusting them to control field hardness and speed. Today we've got it turned up all the way---just the way we're going to do it when we play Notre Dame in September!

To the Graduates

Well, graduates, you finally made it.

You've been dreaming of this day. Now it's here. Are you excited? And maybe just a little sentimental now that you are leaving us? Have these have been good years for you? They've certainly been good years for the University because of you.

The class of 1991 is 8,xxx strong..... and I do mean strong. In fact, this Stadium, home of Champions, is exactly the right place to hold your graduations. Because you have been real champions.

You have been exceptionally strong in talent, in energy, creativity and dedication. You leave our University community better than you found it. From athletics to the Daily, from politics to creative arts and performance, from the Greek system to the Marching Band, so many of you graduating students made a difference here. The Sunrunner team

showed just what Michigan can do. Detroit they make you

proud a class
something our President has called forth in our
nation as volunteers in hundreds of
community action
projects mark of a
Michigan education. I think,
to serve great public purposes. Truly much has been given to us
and much is expected of us in return. I know you will not disappoint.

The world will need your commitment, talents and leadership. Rarely in history has society faced more profound transformations in its economy, its people, or its obligations in the world. Educated people and the ideas they produce have become the wealth of nations. You are a significant part of that wealth. Use your knowledge wisely, well, and for the good of others.

You will live most of your lives in a new century, one we can barely imagine let alone foretell. The only thing we can know with certainty, is that you will face great responsibilities and challenges.

But not to worry. You are equal to your task. You have the essential ingredient. You have that unique Michigan spirit, a will to achieve excellence, to set high ethical standards, to take risks and make sacrifices, to go all out. You have proved to be Champions and the "leaders and the best".

We will miss you. We will watch your future achievement with pride....and a few requests for donations.

Honoring Parents

We have all heaped praise on our graduates and taken a bit of credit ourselves for their accomplishments. But, let's face it. The real heroes of this day are the parents-- the families-- of our graduates. You are the ones who have cared and worked and provided, you have loved and hoped, helped and sacrificed to bring these students to this moment.

The selflessness that parenthood requires might seem to be out of fashion of late. But all the while families like yours just kept going, struggling and striving to give your children, and through them, our society, a better future.

And look at the wonders you have worked. I hope you feel proud today. You have earned the gratitude and respect of everyone in this Stadium.

Would all of the family members of today's graduates please rise and let us show our appreciation.

Thank you.

Governor Engler

Now it is my great pleasure to welcome a man who took risks and defied the odds to take up leadership of our state. He did so at a critical turning point in our history. He did not take on an easy job. But because he has had the courage to recognize that it is children and their education that are the keys to a prosperous and fulfilling future for our people, he has earned the special gratitude of scholars and educators and of all those who are determined to make Michigan a better place for all our people in coming generations. Please welcome our new Governor, John Engler.

President's Departure

We are so proud and grateful to President and Mrs. Bush for honoring our graduates and our University with your visit. We are also delighted to welcome you to the Michigan extended family, Class of '91. On behalf of all of us, thank you for coming and Go Blue!

Following Hail to the Victors

Before we conclude our program, just a few words to the graduates. Your college years have as much impact as anything that will follow in your lives. It sets you on a career course. Many of the friends you have made will remain close throughout your lives. As many as a third of you have our lifetime companions in college.

Think of your college experience as an anchor, a tie to the knowledge and values that you can depend on for guidance and inspiration. And, look at it this way, as an alum you will always have something to do on Saturday afternoons in the fall.....And on New Year's Day!!!

Most of you will be leaving Ann Arbor now. But I suspect you will find yourself returning. You know, one of the most moving moments in the cycle of campus life comes in early September when the Ann Arbor merchants put up banners along State Street and South U saying, "Welcome home".

In a very real sense, this University has become your home. You will always be a member of the Michigan family. Today you join that long line of maize and blue alumni that stretches back over eight generations and is now over 350,000 strong, one out of every thousand Americans.

And if there is single common theme that seems to characterize the lives of Michigan graduates, it is the theme of leadership. It has been said that there are really only two types of folks in this world:

Those who always say "Why?" And those who always say "Why not!" I hope that your years here in Michigan have prepared you to always answer in the "let's go for it" spirit of the Maize and Blue.

Welcome you to the Michigan family. We wish you health, happiness, and the satisfaction of a rewarding and meaningful life.

Congratulations and "Go-Blue".

