

CHANCELLOR RECK - COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
May 6, 2008

Commencement is always a very special occasion and today is no exception.

First of all, it is special for the graduates.

They have earned an Indiana University degree that will benefit them the rest of their lives.

They have sacrificed and worked hard.

Today they can celebrate.

Commencement also is special for the families and friends of the graduates.

They have witnessed the ups and downs of the journey a student takes to earn a degree.

They have seen the struggles and the triumphs.

Today they can celebrate.

This ceremony also is special to me, as chancellor, because it is the first time I am sharing the platform with President McRobbie as the President of Indiana University.

Thank you, President McRobbie, for your leadership and support of IU South Bend.

We have a lot to celebrate on this campus.

Construction of student housing is nearly complete.

In the fall, we will be welcoming the first class of residential students to campus.

Student housing represents another step in the evolution of IU South Bend as we strive to serve the needs of students, the community and the state.

Plans are underway to renovate the Associates Building into a modern classroom facility called the Education and Arts Building.

The renovated building will be a modern instructional facility that is critical to the mission of the campus.

Construction is underway on the Administration Building to enhance the gateway to the university.

Improvements include a renovated entrance, lobby and offices on the first floor.

On the second floor the School of Business and Economics is being renovated, along with the staircase and meeting rooms.

I want to thank the donors who have made this project possible.

And tonight we celebrate the first students graduating with a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene.

The program is an important enhancement to the dental programs at IU South Bend and meets a need in the local health care community.

As you can see, the campus is moving forward.

One thousand and 60 students are graduating in the class of 2008.

More than 200 are receiving graduate degrees, nearly 700 are receiving baccalaureate degrees, and we are conferring over 100 associate degrees.

These graduates will join more than 27,000 alumni of IU South Bend who are located around the world.

The youngest graduate in the class is 21 years old.

The oldest graduate is 59 years young.

I am also happy to point out some family connections in this class.

We have four husband and wife teams who are graduating together tonight.

Mike and Shannon Renfrow.

Mike is graduating with a master's degree in public affairs.

Shannon has earned her bachelor's degree in biochemistry and will be attending the IU School of Medicine in South Bend.

Patience Taruwinga and his wife Idah.

Patience has earned a master's of science in management of information technologies and Idah is receiving a master's of social work degree.

Landon and Mista Lauber are both graduating tonight with a bachelor's degree in general studies.

And James and Mary Elizabeth Stembel of Wakarusa graduate this evening with bachelor's degrees in psychology.

In addition to new diplomas, they welcomed a baby boy two weeks ago.

Congratulations to our husband and wife graduates.

We also want to take a moment to honor two students with posthumous degrees.

Kristen Heimbach was pursuing her master's degree in special education.

Those who knew her said her connection to children was a unique gift.

She worked as a special education teacher at an elementary school in Michigan City while continuing her classes at IU South Bend.

She was committed to finish whatever she started, including her graduate degree.

Kelly Ducet was a criminal justice major.

She was awarded the Indiana Sheriff's Association Scholarship for years in a row and the Paul DeGeuch Scholarship for two years.

Her goal was to become a South Bend police officer and the first female SWAT team member.

She was a member of the South Bend Police Department Cadet Program.

The Cadet Kelly Ducet Memorial Scholarship has been established in her memory.

President McRobbie and I had the privilege of presenting their families with their diplomas earlier this evening.

They are in our thoughts tonight.

There are other outstanding graduates I want to brag about.

Ann Drake was living her life and working.

She never intended on going to college.

However, at age 46, she became blind due to glaucoma and knew she had to do something.

So she turned to education to make a change in her life.

She was uncertain about the challenge of attending her first class but she was warmly greeted by students and faculty.

She said everything happens for a reason, even blindness, and her reason is to help others.

She is applying for graduate school to become a counselor or a social worker.

Tonight she graduates with a degree in general studies.

She will walk proudly across the stage with her guide dog Tabitha, who also attended all the classes but is not getting a degree because she mostly slept through the coursework.

Veronica Boyle is dedicated to protecting the environment.

As a dental student she noticed the use of Styrofoam cups in campus dining areas.

Veronica knew about the campus theme of sustainability and decided to try to help

She organized an effort to replace the Styrofoam cups with environmentally safe Nalene bottles.

Veronica also formed the Dental Hygiene Student Club

She is a member of the first class to graduate with a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene.

Aria Zandi is an outstanding graduate student in the School of Business and Economics.

He achieved a grade point average of more than 3-point-9 while working full-time and raising a family with his wife.

He wanted to learn more about business so he decided to come to IU South Bend at the age of 50.

Tonight he graduates with a master's of science in managing information technologies.

Chava Lerman never expected to go to college.

She was not a good student and college was the furthest thing from her mind.

Her former teachers would be surprised to learn her next step is medical school.

She attributes her success to IU South Bend professors who saw her potential.

She graduates tonight with a bachelor's degree in biochemistry.

Mr. President, I have presented a brief profile of the 2008 IU South Bend graduating class.

They are successful, hard-working and creative.

Each with a desire to make a difference in a changing and challenging world.

These graduates have met Indiana University's expectations and aspire to achieve excellence in their lives.

I present them to you with pride.

Ladies and gentlemen, graduates, families and friends, special guests, faculty and staff... it is now my pleasure to introduce Indiana University President Michael McRobbie for his charge to the class of 2008.