

CHANCELLOR RECK - COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
May 12, 2009

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, to President McRobbie, to the trustees of Indiana University, and to the faculty and staff of IU South Bend because these graduates make us proud of our work and our institution.

932 students are graduating in the class of 2009.

150 are receiving graduate degrees, nearly 700 are receiving baccalaureate degrees, and we are conferring over 80 associate degrees.

These graduates will join more than 28,000 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 58 years young.

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

Husband and wife **Edem and Adelaide Statsi** are graduating together tonight.

Edem has earned a master's degree in Management of Information Technology and Adelaide is graduating with a master's degree in Public Affairs.

A mother and son are graduating together tonight.

Teresa Hayes-Santos is receiving a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and her son **Roberto** is getting his bachelor's degree in Philosophy.

Two brothers are graduating together tonight with the same degrees.

Jared and Jordan Lynch have both earned a bachelor's of science degree in Business.

I am also proud to point out that tonight's graduating class includes five students who were among the first to live in the new student housing apartments at IU South Bend.

They were part of history on this campus.

There are other outstanding graduates I want to brag about.

Robin Beck has been politically active and involved on campus since she arrived at IU South Bend.

She was research assistance, an intern with the American Democracy Project, president of the political science club and won the John M. Lewis Civic Engagement Award.

She is continuing her studies at the University of Southern Maine in sustainable community planning and development.

Tonight she graduates with a degree in Political Science.

April DeLaPaz is the first person in her family to earn a college degree.

Tonight she graduates with a degree in Biology.

While at IU South Bend she did field research on projects in Kenya and Belize .

She intends to get a Ph.D. in marine biology and eventually do environmental research.

Steven Penzenik graduates tonight with a degree in actuarial science.

After graduating from high school in South Bend, Steve accepted a full-ride presidential scholarship to Ball State University.

Due to a family emergency he was unable to go.

Instead he enrolled at IU South Bend to be close to his family.

His intention was to stay a year or two and transfer to Ball State.

He never left.

When he passed his first actuarial exam he decided he didn't need to leave to get the education he wanted.

On his second exam he got the highest score possible.

He is going on to graduate school at Ohio State University.

Marthe Karasira left Rwanda as the country was in the midst of genocide.

She came to South Bend to live with another family from her home country.

Marthe said while she was in a refugee camp she dreamed of becoming a nurse.

That dream has now come true.

Her family is here tonight to celebrate her triumphs and her American citizenship.

Tyler Leighton was the leading scorer for the IU South Bend Titans men's basketball team and led the conference in scoring, averaging more than 21 points a game.

Tyler is weighing his options – graduate school or playing basketball in Europe.

Tonight he graduates with a degree in General Studies.

I can't ignore the women's team.

Jennifer Vander-Zanden scored 1,455 points in her four years of playing basketball at IU South Bend.

She was named first team All Conference in 06, 07 and 08 while also making Dean's List.

Tonight she graduates with a degree in Education.

Maria Madera is a first generation college graduate.

Her parents encouraged her to keep studying and to go to college.

She has been a peer mentor in the School of Business and Economic for five years.

She used her determination and spirit to help others succeed in school.

She graduates tonight with a degree in Accounting.

Maura Varian is receiving her bachelor's degree at the age of 48.

After graduation she will move to Edinburgh, Scotland where she has been hired as a manager of the Better World Books distribution center.

Tonight she graduates with a degree in General Studies.

Lucas Mark is graduating with a degree in Psychology.

He recently sent me an email to tell me about the extraordinary support he has received this year from his professors at IU South Bend.

Lucas has a two year old son who has been receiving treatment for Hodgkin's disease at Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis.

He said he will always remember the support and compassion he received from his professors.

Sean Haas has earned a bachelor's degree in Education.

He is looking forward to teaching after graduation.

Sean came to IU South Bend after serving four years in the Air Force as a mechanic with a Patriot Missile Battalion in Iraq.

Nathan Laskowski served with the Army in Iraq.

After his war experience he decided he had to find a career that was life affirming.

He said he can make the biggest impact by being a nurse.

After graduation, Nathan will be working in a cardiac unit at Memorial Hospital.

Dusten Roe served in the Marines in from 2000 to 2004, spending time in Iraq and Kuwait.

He is following his mother's footsteps into nursing.

Dusten said he loves to save lives for a living.

Tomorrow he will be on duty in the intensive care unit at Memorial Hospital.

Mr. President, I have presented a brief profile of the 2009 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 2009.