

Commencement Welcome – August 2, 2020

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to welcome our accomplished graduates, and all whom have supported these graduates in their journey...their family, friends, and the faculty and staff of IWU. While we are unable to all gather on Kemp Commencement Plaza for this very special occasion, we are anxious to celebrate your success and applaud all the hard work it represents.

To our graduates, we are so very proud of you. This day represents a great milestone. Congratulations on your academic achievement and thank you for the individual imprint you have undoubtedly left on the IWU community during your time here. While I suspect most of you are anxiously focusing on what lies ahead, I hope you are taking some time to reflect on your experience here. You each leave here with a more informed perspective, greater skills, and a confidence that will fuel your success in whatever path you choose.

This year has brought very different experiences for all of us. Our way of life has been challenged and our societal ills exposed. With that has come anxiety and an unsettling uncertainty. Certainly this last semester here was not what we had hoped for you. This condition prompts all of us to ask ourselves how we can better participate in making this world a better place? We are very proud of the long list of alumni that have met that challenge in so many different ways over the years. I look forward to seeing how the pursuits of today's graduates will unfold, how soon many of you will make IWU proud and join that esteemed roster!

My time at Illinois Wesleyan was many years ago. It is my hope, and my expectation, that many years from now you will look back on the time here, as I do, with an immense appreciation for its impact on your life. The diversity of academic experience that a liberal arts education

provides teaches us to think differently.... shapes critical thinking and widens perspective...these are skills you will often call on in navigating challenges in life. This community also builds deep and lasting friendships. I feel so very fortunate for so many Titan friends still prominent in my life today. In my role as a Trustee, I have the opportunity to meet alumni from many generations that offer these same reflections on how Illinois Wesleyan has shaped their lives. With that, has come an unwavering support and passion for this university. I hope you will share that passion and always stay connected as a life-long Titan, regardless of where in this world life takes you. Know too, that you will always be welcome here and we hope you will always think of this campus as your home.

Today is a day to savor your accomplishments and enjoy the all accolades so fitting of this occasion. Our best wishes for all that lies ahead as you are very soon officially welcomed to the "Proud Crowd" of Illinois Wesleyan University Alumni.