

**GUEST SPEAKER'S SPEECH - DORIS Y. A. AHIATI**  
**AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
**THURSDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2019 (MORNING SESSION)**

***Protocols Observed***

Madam Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Mrs. Mary Chinery-Hese, Members of the University Council, Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Registrar, Provosts, Members of the Advisory Board of the College of Humanities, Members of Convocation, Staff and Students, Alumni, Graduands, Invited Guests, Members of the Press Corps, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, **Good morning to you all and let me use this opportunity to congratulate our amazing graduands.** Congratulations! I hope you made good use of all the opportunities on this great campus. Barely a month ago I sat as graduand somewhere, and also gave the Valedictory speech. So you see, learning does not end with your graduation today.

Years ago, I entered this great university to study French, Swahili and Geography but I graduated with BSc. Admin. Banking and Finance Option. This was because in those days, you entered level 100 and then applied to the University of Ghana Business School, then School of Admin for your level 200. Thanks to the humanities, I qualified with a GPA of 3.99 in the second semester of level 100 to enter the business school. Don't ask me what my CGPA was at graduation. It was nothing to write home about. (Laugh) But The memory has stayed with me because it was by great faith and hardwork when I was most desperate that God came through. I happened to be the treasurer for the French Club in those days and had not taken French oral test that semester seriously enough so I got an A-. It taught me humility.

Today I want to share a few thoughts with you as you graduate and go out to represent the University of Ghana in the world. I have captioned my thoughts, **Self-Leadership is Crucial in the Digital Economy. You need to excel at leading yourself in order to thrive and successfully navigate the challenges such as safety issues, privacy concerns, ethical and cyber crimes, job security and identity issues that have arisen with the digital evolution.**

**Katherine Miracle's quote 'Do no wait on a Leader, look in the mirror, it is you' perfectly summarizes my message.**

In the fourth industrial or digital revolution, we have witnessed great advances in science and technology. We have created artificial intelligence which competes with human intelligence but cannot replace superior human intelligence. AI has proven useful in many fields including the humanities. Algorithms and machine learning rule the day. My speech was typed with the help of a voice/audio to text app. I beat traffic these days using the fastest route, thanks to GPS assistance showing me real time state of traffic on our roads.

In the science field AI has improved diagnostics and surgical procedures even if ethical concerns are still being discussed on the subject of cloning and gene editing. A Team from Ghana MGHS won an international competition in robotics. Kudos to those young ladies who made us all so proud to be Ghanaians by showing leadership through creativity and innovation. I want to challenge you graduands to go out and excel like these young ladies did and in a more continuous and sustainable way. Because the vast transformation in our daily lives resulting from technological advancement require self leadership in order to navigate the new landscape with integrity to impact humanity positively and in a sustainable way due to the concerns arising. **Despite advancement in science and technology, humanity remains at the core of our existence.** Our ability to be human boils down to responding positively to the SDGs. Underpinning which is the unshakable resolve to lead at every level. That's why I want to call on all to step up into personal leadership. I will share a couple of pointers to becoming good leaders.

To lead yourself you need **first a mindset shift**. When you enrolled in the University of Ghana, you were probably pre-occupied with how to make a GPA of 4.0 and leave with a first class. That is a good measure of leadership but it is no guarantee of excellence in the modern world. Stories abound of great men and women who have set up institutions impacting lives positively including those for higher learning but who themselves did not earn first class on the academic side. We need intellectual intelligence and this great university has given you the foundation for that. You also need emotional intelligence which empowers you to lead yourself well before you can lead others. The great leadership coach John C. Maxwell says 'Everything rises and falls with leadership'. And it is time to redefine leadership for Ghana and Africa....that leadership is not positional....how else can one lead from the back without titles? How else can we get the job done if we think leadership is chilling in the A.C. and calling the shots without knowing precisely the problem we are trying to solve. This reminds me of the younger me. I wanted to dress smartly and sit in an office solving problems. I have grown to know better thankfully, that you have to be on

the ground, in the problem to develop the most suitable, effective and creative solutions to address them. Becoming a Graduate is no longer equal to wearing a suit and tie if that doesn't solve a problem. A Graduate is equal to analytical thinking, dissecting of problems to arrive at appropriate solutions, optimizing resource use in a sustainable way. That includes knowing that cotton clothing works better for productivity in our weather. Long live Africa's budding clothing industry.

Success is indeed no longer what it was perceived to be – self-centred, plenty money, beautiful clothes, flashy cars, attendants at your beck and call. Success is now defined by the lives you impact, the effect you leave on your physical environment and the experience you create for people by leveraging new technologies safely, ethically and effectively. Mark Riedl and Brent Harrison in an effort to address the concerns of ethics in the digital age are working on a solution called the Quixote System. The system attempts to enable Artificial Intelligence to learn 'value alignment' by reading stories from different cultures. This works because it's the same approach adopted in teaching young humans the ethical code, through stories, fables, legends we pick the nuances and subtleties of morality and ethics which differ from culture to culture. Where will they get the stories for this project? You are right, you answered that. So it's an era where the humanities and fine arts are appreciated. Where are the story tellers, authors, musicians, poets and the linguists?

The second thing you need is emotional intelligence, thankfully that can be learnt and improved with practice. The nature of work and work environment is rapidly changing. Thanks to AI, humans can be brought together in virtual work environments, eliminating the need for a designated physical work location and physical presence. You may be working from your bedroom or kitchen. Therefore team members at work may be across geographical boundaries with diverse cultural backgrounds, values and experiences. To do well, you must know how to interact successfully in a multicultural environment and straddle new technologies to get the work done in an ethical manner. That's what gives meaning to life. To have a meaningful life in this age, you need meaningful relationships, passionate interests and meaningful work (according to Ezekiel Emmanuel a bioethicist) which are all dependent on emotional intelligence.

Getting the work done must meet ESG criteria standards irrespective of the degree of national progress with this policy. ESG measures sustainability, social and ethical impact of operations. Trust for e.g. is a key issue in the Digital age and being ESG compliant gives the needed assurance. **This is where your personal leadership comes in.** You don't have to wait for the politically elected leaders of the land to show the way, lead the way and go

the way before you follow as a responsible citizen. The leadership we need today is of individuals who identify a way, test the way, choose to go the way, prove the results, and convince the people in their immediate network with that evidence to join hands and go that way together, until we have a critical enough number to multiply the effect of this initiative to address problems of national, continental and global proportions. Therefore be creative to challenge the status quo as leaders to originate bespoke solutions to problems facing our world and you will have been successful.

You don't have to think hard about which problem there is to tackle. Look for the UN's SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals are a global call to action to end poverty, protect the earth's environment and climate, and ensure that people everywhere can enjoy peace and prosperity. They comprise of 17 interconnected and ambitious Goals which address the major development challenges faced us in Ghana and around the world.

The goals, namely

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent work and Economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate Action
14. Life below water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions

## 17. Partnerships for the goals

emphasise the preferred state of general welfare of mankind through poverty alleviation, good sanitation, education, economic empowerment among others. These goals highlight the many problems that are significant enough to make the SDG list to be tackled first. Anything that draws us closer to the goals is a good place to start, and start with yourself rather than contribute to the problem.

You don't need to be big to start. Your contribution need not be the one to 100% solve the problem. But even your 0.001% contribution counts. That's why we need you to start by being a leader to yourself first. Imagine if you were each to commit to respect yourself, respect others and respect your responsibility for your own actions, to be accountable to yourself to be of good integrity, not abuse privileges including company and state resources, protect your environments (not litter), apply resources responsibly...like not waste purified water, etc etc that would make a difference, right? And what if our friends and families joined us inspired by us? And if their friends' friends joined the movement?

The third thought I want to share is effective communication. Very key to your success is knowing how to communicate effectively. Sharing information is one thing, the information being received well and interpreted correctly to elicit the right response and feedback requires the skill of connecting. Connecting disarms your listener by earning their trust which is scarce in the digital age.

This skill of connecting rides on EQ. Emotionally intelligent people are conscious and aware of their emotions, know how to regulate those emotions for desired outcomes including self-restraint and self control, they know what motivates them and use the knowledge to their benefit. This awareness empowers them to put themselves in the place of others including work colleagues and partners, show empathy as appropriate, and exhibit acceptable social skills to communicate effectively and achieve team goals in a sustainable way. Remember that self-organised teams and flat organizational hierarchy are the order of the day.

So challenge the status quo in relating with superiors, subordinates and colleagues or co-equals.

Speak up, share your views and disagree respectfully. Learn to understand what you meet or find and seek to improve on it, innovate by embracing new technologies. Be the difference not just for your sake but also for God and country.

Finally, before I share my personal story, build and value your network. I hope you know the person sitting next to you because you tried to engage them in a conversation. today people networks which thrive on emotional intelligence has become a crucial success factor.

Emotional intelligence requires you to be self-aware, self-regulate, understand motivation, be empathetic and apply same in social skills. So work on your Emotional intelligence especially be equipped with social skills for building resilient relationships with colleagues at work. It will help to manage complex situations and environments at work.

At the heart of excellence in relationship building is your personal confidence. Being original and having a continuous growth mind-set make it easier to be confident by accepting you for who you are. So accept that you are ok, you are a good enough to start with, and with the understanding that you are a work in progress. Never cease to identify and work on those areas that could do with some improvements.

### **My story**

I grew up in a cocoa growing community in the western region of Ghana. There weren't many role models beside my dear parents who taught me the values that guide me today – integrity, hardwork, excellence, empathy and sacrifice – ubuntu and uhuru. We didn't have the luxury of social amenities and infrastructure. Beside the library and the church, I can't think of a place to hang out like you can do today in the malls and pubs etc today.

And I was hungry enough to make the destitution I saw around me better. So I looked for that which would empower me to make a difference in the lives more people. I thought becoming born again Christian was a good place to start. I am a woman of faith. It helped me learn to focus. One of my strengths is focus.

Then I thought it's a good idea to keep learning because there was so much I didn't know and every

new discovery or lesson learnt changed my life for the better like learning the importance of balanced meals and personal hygiene. I fell sick less often. So I shared what I learnt to make other lives better too. I didn't restrict my scope for learning, I didn't stick to a single discipline even though I specialized in banking and finance, I learnt some science privately so Drs ask me whether I am a Doctor when I interact with them. I walked 12 km both ways to the only secondary school in my community to acquire computer literacy in the early nineties when I kept hearing about computers. That was the nearest computer in my community. I also realized

I could only know so much even with continuous learning but others knew what I didn't know. So relationships became extremely valuable. I could only do so much and be in so many places but those in my network could help extend myself. It's been helpful leveraging relationships and I am grateful to all the wonderful people am privileged to have in my network. Your network is your net worth so forge positive partnership, above you and beneath you and sideways, it's a game changer in an age of collaboration. In my journey, which I am still on for I am an African on a Mission, and I have a long way still to go, I have had many opportunities for which I am grateful. I have had challenges too, and I tried to graciously embrace them too. Sometimes I have done well at assignments entrusted to me. Sometimes too I messed up and failed miserably, but no I didn't quite fail...for like Thomas Edison I learnt 10,000 other ways not to do it. I picked the lessons most times when I failed.

**To conclude,** let me reiterate that we are in the 4th industrial revolution called the digital revolution where machines and humans engage more closely than ever before in what might appear to be the final show down. Prof. Klaus Schwab, founder of the world economic forum says 'In the new world, it is not the big fish that eat the small fish. It's the fast fish that eat the slow fish' There will be more disruptions, surprises, more frequently at a faster pace and you must be prepared to deal with them like a leader. To harness technology to our advantage while addressing safety, privacy, ethical concerns, job security and identity issues, we each need to be responsible and accountable in our attitude and approach to life. And that is self-leadership. A great leader is always prepared, thinks ahead, proactively develops solutions to anticipated situations even before they manifest, a leader learns continually, pays the price of leadership through discipline and sacrifices, is open to new ideas and technologies, knows how to connect and engage with all manner of persons, helped by great social skills resulting from emotional intelligence (which can be learnt), is disciplined enough to pay the price of leadership and sacrifice when the need be to prioritize that which matters the most through focus and clarity of thought and intent.

Great leaders stay informed and think ahead to stay ahead of the curve and above all they are energized enough to embrace the challenges that will come and so adopt a healthy physical, emotional and spiritual lifestyle. I believe in you. I believe you have the power in you to excel and to make a difference. **If you can lead yourself to graduate today, you can do anything you set your heart and mind after.** So Go out there and make the college of humanities and the University of Ghana proud. Let me end with the quote from Kathrine Miracle 'Do not wait on a Leaders, look in the mirror, it is you'

God bless us all. Thank you very much.



**VALEDICTORY SPEECH BY KEITH OKO CLELAND**  
**AT THE GREAT HALL, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
**THURSDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2019 (MORNING SESSION)**

The Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Members of the University Council, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Registrar, Provosts of Colleges, Deans, Members of the College of Humanities Advisory Board, Distinguished Guest Speaker, Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Members of Convocation, Nananom, Nii Mei, Naa Mei, Parents and Guardians, Fellow Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning.

I deem it the greatest honour of my life to be selected to stand before you all to deliver the Valedictory Address for this morning's Congregation Ceremony. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to God Almighty, whose grace and favour abounds. To Him alone be all glory and praise for making this day possible.

In our primary school days, there was always one day we looked forward to the most; the day when we sat back to relax and reward ourselves for enduring an exhausting term. That was the famous "Our Day", and it was always a day of joy and laughter, food sharing and merrymaking. But then, the joy of those days is incomparable to what resonates through us this day as we celebrate the ultimate end of the academic path we embarked on about 22 years ago. Congratulations Class of 2019 and welcome to the greatest Our Day of our lives yet! This, indeed, is the day the Lord has made and we will rejoice in it.

We sit here together, not only in celebration of what we have accomplished, but also to reminisce on the journey we began together and reflect on its invaluable impact on each of us. There is a famous Chinese proverb that says, "千里之行，始于足下", which translates, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." My fellow graduands, our journey of 1,353 days as students on the hills of Legon began with one small step four years ago. Although we entered through the same gate, we embarked on vastly different paths with our own distinct expectations but we have all converged at the same finish line in celebration of our success story. We can confidently say that, by God's grace, we have fought the good fight, we have finished the race. Class of 2019, we made it!

It is only now that we stand across the finish line that we can look back with a set of different lenses and truly appreciate where we started from and what we have gone through just to sit here together. Notably, though many of us started this journey alone, we encountered strangers

along the way who inspired us, who challenged us to be better versions of ourselves, with some we broke bread, some shared in our struggles, and now, they have become friends who will be with us for life. We may have started alone, but we are certainly not leaving alone. We are leaving here as a strongly bonded, inter-connected body of networks and as better people, and we owe it all to this journey.

Indeed, it is the nostalgia of the beginning that immortalizes the experiences that live on in our hearts. We recall our anxiety from network jam while we tried applying for our first campus residences. We remember our first confusion when, in a desperate bid to find accommodation, some of us naively walked all the way to the Registry only to ask where the Porters Lodge was. We recollect our first university lecture in Jones Quartey Building (JQB) and our first rush to quickly register for University of Ghana Required Courses (UGRCs), where we come face to face with the almighty *modus ponens* and *modus tonens* of critical thinking, as well as Modern Language Association (MLA) and American Psychological Association (APA) referencing of academic writing. How can we forget our heart attacks when we checked our university exam results (MIS) for the first time?

As we progressed along the journey, the more we realized that this different world in which we found ourselves had changed our perceptions of what we thought we once knew. We had to adjust to this new environment which came with early morning lectures, some sleepless nights, group studies and the stress of meeting deadlines.

In more ways than we may care to admit, it was these challenges over the four years that shaped us and taught us invaluable life lessons; our capacities were stretched and we realized our full potentials. It is here, that our integrity was tested and we emerged as men and women of character and virtue. It is here, that we learnt to take charge of our own destinies. It is here on this journey, within the four walls of Legon, that we dreamt and imagined the future.

It is now here, finally at the finish line, as we look back in retrospect, that our hearts are filled with gratitude and appreciation. We thank this great world class University through whose gates thousands of celebrated and illustrious sons and daughters of Ghana and Africa have passed; many of whom have attained national and international accolades. Indeed, we are grateful to the hardworking staff of this University for the conducive and enabling environment availed us to pursue our academic dreams. We remain indebted to our lecturers, who inspired, challenged and trained us to become intellectuals worthy of the world. Fellow graduands, our wonderful lecturers deserve an applause.

Now, we wish to extend immeasurable gratitude from the depths of our hearts to our parents and guardians who raised, loved, nurtured, and inspired us in our challenges, who went to great lengths and beyond to ensure that our fees were paid, consistently provided allowances for our upkeep and spent years on their knees in prayer for us and still praying..... Our dear parents and guardians, we sincerely appreciate you more than you would ever know. Fellow graduands, let us rise to our feet and appreciate them with a resounding applause.

To my parents, Mr. Ramses & Mrs. Adelaide Cleland, words cannot express my immense gratitude to you. God richly bless you for being loving but very firm to bring out the best in me.

And now, let us, at this moment, with a short moment of silent prayer, show the greatest appreciation and thanksgiving to God Almighty for the many things that cannot be itemized.

Fellow graduands, we sit here at this Congregation, in celebration of our victory! But as we celebrate, let us not take for granted the quality of education that Ghana's Premier University has offered us. We must not forget that this is in no way the end, rather, it is just the beginning of the best chapter of our lives. The Chinese say: “走出学校的小门, 走进社会的大门.” which means “We walk out of the small gates of school into the grand gate of society”. The world, of which we have heard many things, awaits us beyond the walls of Legon. Though we may not know, for certain, what the world out there specifically holds for us, we are optimistic of the choices before us: to either accept it as it is, or to accept our responsibility to change it. And change it for better, with God, we shall!

In the immortal words of the late Robin Williams: “There have been others before you, they believed they were destined for great things just like you, and if you just listen, you can hear them whisper their legacy to you - Carpe Diem, seize the day!” Fellow graduands, we have never been alone. Many are they who have run this same race we have. They endured pain and struggles just as ours and at the end of it all, they sat on the same chairs you sit on today and wore the same gowns. Although they have long gone out before us, their immortal words of encouragement and hope resound on the hills of Legon to each and every one of us. If you listen carefully, you will hear them whisper their legacy to you - Carpe Diem, seize the day!

They want us to make our lives extraordinary; to ride on their legacy to greater heights and beyond. They stir us to dream big without fear of breaking the boundaries of our imagination. They inspire us with the words

of Paul Brandt not to believe the sky is the limit when there are footprints on the moon. They encourage us with the words of David McCullough Jr to keep climbing, not so the world can see us, but so that we can see the world. They remind us that this is the time for the youth to plant the seeds of the future, because the world of tomorrow is in our hands. So let us seize the day, inspire change, push boundaries, and stand virtuous!

I will end with the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams”. So, my fellow graduands, let us, as Les Brown said: “shoot for the moon and if we miss, we will be among the stars.” Class of 2019, let us, together, move forward with focus and integrity and make our University, our nation Ghana, Africa and our loved ones proud.

God bless the Class of 2019! God bless the University of Ghana!! God bless our homeland Ghana!!!! Thank you.

**GUEST SPEAKER'S SPEECH - KWABENA ADU-KUSI, BA (LEGON), LLM**  
**(STANFORD), BL**  
**AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2019 (AFTERNOON SESSION)**

Chairman of the University Council, representing the Chancellor  
Members of the University Council,  
Vice Chancellor,  
Pro Vice-Chancellors,  
Madam Registrar,  
Provosts,  
Members of the Advisory Board of the College of Humanities,  
Members of Convocation,  
Staff and Students,  
Alumni,  
Invited Guests,  
Members of the Press Corps  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen  
Graduands,

**Introduction**

I am deeply honoured to address you today. I must thank the Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Registrar and the Provost, College of Humanities for the opportunity to speak at this meeting.

The first time I came around this Great Hall, it was for my matriculation. The place felt really daunting and intimidating. Twenty-Three years (23) on, I am back here as the commencement speaker, even so this Hall seems still intimidating.

Congratulations to the Humanities and Social Sciences Class of 2019. You have graduated from the best University in Ghana! And one of the best in Africa!

I know you can't wait to take your selfies and create your snapchat and instagram videos. I should therefore be quick and straightforward in this speech.

For all parents, guardians and family members, a big congratulations to you. On behalf of the graduating class, I say thank you for your sacrifice and support throughout these last four (4) years. This class could not have graduated today without all of your help! Of course, the teaching and non-

teaching staff of this University also deserve grave acknowledgement. Your support for these students has been immense and for that we salute you.

I am a proud graduate of this University. A former student of the Economic Department and Law Faculty. I have many fond memories of the University of Ghana (UG). UG, gave me many things: Academic foundation, leadership skills, exposure and importantly many enduring relationships.

I know commencement speakers have a responsibility – to advise, encourage and provide hope to the graduating class. There is, however, no guarantee that anything that is said would be remembered anyway. I hope I would be lucky and that a few of what I say today would stay with you for a lifetime.

So, you are done with one phase of life – you are done with school – or are you? For some of you, this would be a terminal degree. Others may go on to pursue other or further academic interests. Whatever course you decide to take, the school of life has just now been opened to you. Your experiences and training here at the University of Ghana should hopefully help you navigate this new school you are about to enter.

It is fair to say however that your training and experiences here at the University of Ghana (UG), whilst helpful, could not have prepared you completely for the school of life. There are many more lessons to learn. You must, therefore, be open to learn new things and in some cases, unlearn a few things as you face life and the realities of it.

As you graduate, I shall like to touch on three of these lessons that are, for me, very important for this school of life:

1. Other people matter
2. Do not be defined by your failures
3. Control what you can and leave what you cannot control to luck/chance/miracles

### **Other People matter**

In your quest for success and as you climb the ladder of life, remember always that “other people matter.” Your own happiness and indeed the survival, success and development of your community and country is dependent in part on your realization that other people matter too. This life is not only about you.

Dr. Christopher Peterson, who was a Professor of psychology at the University of Michigan notes that positive psychology research has shown that *“It is in the company of others that we often experience pleasure and certainly how we best savour its aftermath.... Good relationships with other people may be a necessary condition for our own happiness, even in the markedly individualist cultures like the contemporary United States.”*<sup>1</sup> So, keep the relationships you have developed in this University well and develop new ones.

It is undisputed that among you would be leaders of this country, Africa and the world in various capacities. Some will be lecturers, teachers, civil and public servants, international public servants politicians, parents etc.

You would have the two options set before you; You may choose to act entirely in your self-interest, in which case, you may not mind if you are unethical, corrupt and careless about what other people care about.

Alternatively, you may choose to act for the public good, understanding that people matter: be ethical in all your dealings, care about people and what concerns them, including the environment we live in.

Global warming is upon us. The United Nation (UN) reports that from shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. We need urgent action from this generation because the future of the next generation is at risk.

I invite you to begin today by taking little steps towards halting global warming and saving our planet. Can you all for starters decide to plant at least one tree within a month of your graduation to commemorate your graduation and invite others to do so too?

I commend you to share in the humanist African philosophy, “Ubuntu” which essentially means, I am, because you are.” In essence, “a person is a person through other people.”

Your success would be meaningless if it is at the expense of others. Indeed, all successes are meaningless if it is achieved at the expense of others. So, I urge you, remember always that people matter!

**Let not failure define you.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-good-life/200806/other-people-matter-two-examples>

I have had my fair share of failures, even academic failures, for which reason alone I should not be qualified to address this meeting.

In this very University, in my second semester in level 300, I failed one economics course, that really dropped my GPA. I was so determined not to let my failure define me that I gave thanks publicly in Methodist Presbyterian Union (MPU) on the Sunday following the release of the results to the amusement of the members in Church. I thanked God, even in my failure.

Here I am, addressing you after those academic failures. Indeed, my GPA notwithstanding, I had the opportunity to attend for my Masters in Law (LLM), Stanford Law School, perhaps the best and one of the most difficult law schools to be admitted into, with an admission rate of about 10%.

So, not even my academic failures stopped me from pursuing my academic interest in one of the best Universities in the world. After graduating from UG, I took every opportunity seriously and tried to be the best I could.

The point is this: your GPA is important but what you do with your GPA is even more important.

My message is simple, failure is the opportunity to begin again, but this time more intelligently! Failure will never overtake you if your determination to succeed is strong enough.

So, when you have to deal with failure now or in the future do not let failure hold you down.

### **Control what you can and leave what you cannot control to luck/chance/miracles**

In context, I consider miracles as happenings that are beyond the capacity, capabilities or even expectations of man or woman. Some call it luck, others call it chance. According to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries Scottish Philosopher, David Hume, Miracles are “violations of the laws of nature.”

I support dreaming! I am a dreamer myself. I agree that planning and hard work are necessary for survival and success. But I have also realized that there are times when hard work planning and preparation alone does not seem to work. Please understand this, in the school of life, it is not



everything that you can control. It is not everything that depends on your efforts. Sometime you need a miracle or if like me you are a person of faith, you need God.

I am however convinced that you must learn to create or improve your own miracles or luck. In your hope to experience a miracle or luck, you must be deliberate and conscientious, prepare yourself by perfecting your craft. You must position yourself in such a way that will give you an advantage when you experience luck or a miracle.

Consider the oft used example of the sport of golfing: whether or not a golf ball, hit with a club will land in the hole depends on luck and who hits the ball. If the golf ball is hit by an amateur golfer, the chances of his luck producing the desired result is slimmer, as compared to the ball being hit by a professional golfer, like Tiger Woods. Tiger Woods spends several hours training and preparing and by that is able to improve his luck. So, you must be prepared for your miracle or luck. Luck is only beneficial to the one who is prepared.

When I started my firm, ADU-KUSI PRUC, formerly Law Bureau 11 years ago, I had to hope for a miracle-that I would get my first and other subsequent clients. I had left my otherwise very comfortable life as the head of legal department of a reputable bank and later as the Legal Advisor and Company Secretary for a Multinational Company to set up this firm. At that time, money was not the most important consideration for me. I simply wanted to do what I enjoyed and thought I was good at- I had read a book earlier in my professional life which said “do what you enjoy doing the money would follow.” Besides, I thought setting up a law firm would give me opportunity to take on and train other lawyers.

I started that law firm with absolutely nothing except my personal writing desk and computer. Somehow, by dint of hard work, focus, a lot of luck and ofcourse the grace of God, our firm has grown to become a significant business law firm in Ghana.

Having worked to the best of my ability, I earned the trust and respect of all my previous employers. Accordingly, all the institutions I worked for in the past continue to use the services of my firm even up till today. I did well not to burn my bridges as I progressed.

Bottom line: work hard, control what you can control and leave what you can't control to miracles or luck. Your preparation and hardwork would but improve your luck.

The world is now open to you- go on explore it! Work hard don't let your failures keep you down, remember that people matter, prepare yourself for miracles. Go make yourself, your family, Ghana and Africa proud!

I must congratulate you once again. I wish you the very best in your future endeavours!

I thank you for your time.

**SPEECH BY GUEST SPEAKER - LINDA SAARA SELBY  
AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON  
FRIDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER 2019 (MORNING SESSION)**

Good morning,

Chairman and Members of the University Council, the Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Registrar, Provost of the College of Humanities, Deans, Members of the College Advisory Board, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Directors, Niime and Naamei, Specially Invited Guests, Parents, Family, friends and the Graduates. In the first place I wish to state that I was pleasantly surprised and humbled when I received the invitation to be part of this august occasion and particularly to deliver a speech. Having overcome my surprise and anxiety I accepted to be here with you today and I feel privileged.

I take this opportunity to congratulate each one of you graduating today.

Indeed, it brings back great memories of myself as a graduating student in 2003, after five years of study. I was excited at the thought of going out into the world to pursue a career. But if you ask me what was the message delivered by the Guest Speaker that day, I am sure I was too excited to remember or perhaps to even have noticed when the speaker had left the podium after his speech. But today, I crave your rapt attention so that at least each one of us would go home with one lesson.

Since I got this invitation to speak to you, various topics have been flooding my thoughts but eventually I settled on one. For all of you graduating today, I believe that the greater majority will be pursuing their career goals while some of you will opt to pursue further courses and degrees. But be it as it may there are very important lessons that you will need to carry along wherever you find yourself if you want to be ahead of the peers. Today each of us has acquired a certificate in one specialty or another but whatever certificates we have, it is important to keep it at the backs of our minds that there are several others like us in the same job market with comparable skills set.

Literature has it that there are two sets of skills we need to excel to make a difference in our various spheres of life. These are the “**Hard**” and “**Soft**” skills. The hard skills comprise academic skills, experience and levels of expertise. These constitute 15% while the remaining 85% stems from our soft skills which will be the focus of my message this morning.

I would like to share my personal experience as a panelist who interviewed graduates for a Management Trainee position in a reputable private company. A little over sixty applications were received and these numbers were pruned down to ten after an aptitude test. Eventually, three candidates who formed the crème de la crème were selected for the final interview. All three were supposed to be seated latest by 7:45am on the day of the interview, which they all promptly did. They were professionally dressed and looked visibly excited being part of the final list. During the review of CV's, what we noticed which was coincidentally common on their CV's was that each of them had "**exhibition of a sense of ownership**" as part of other positive traits.

As panelists, we needed to confirm which of these finalists would truly exhibit a sense of ownership when given the nod. At exactly 7:55am on that fateful morning, an officer from the HR Department walked in to welcome them and to notify them of the sudden breakdown of the elevator hence the need for each of them to use a particular walkway to the interview room which was two floors away. Each candidate was to spend a maximum of five minutes with the panel. Unknown to the candidates, on the second floor and close to the interview room, was a hand washing sink where the tap had deliberately been left flowing. Meanwhile, the cameras on the various floors were actively working.

The first two candidates went through to the interview room one after the other when it was their turn. They each saw the running tap but glaringly walked past to the interview room. The first candidate spent a few seconds in front of a mirror right beside the sink to adjust his tie before proceeding to the interview room. The second candidate paused for a second and muttered something to himself. Perhaps he was rehearsing how he would greet or introduce himself to the panel.

On reaching the second floor, when it was her turn, the third candidate who also saw the tap flowing, stopped to turn it off before proceeding to the interview room.

Which of these candidates had indeed exhibited a sense of ownership?

After the interview session, all three candidates were invited to meet with the panel and to find out which of them had been selected as the best candidate for the role. Each of them had exceeded the required pass mark but before the candidate of choice could be announced, a short video had to be watched. The video showed how each of them had walked through the corridors to the interview room and their reaction to the visibly flowing tap. As a panel, we were very detailed in our search not only for hard skills but

also soft skills, hence the decision to record every stage of the interview right from the very time the candidates entered our premises.

In the end the third candidate was selected because her reaction to the environment was a true reflection of the exhibition of a sense of ownership as was captured on her CV.

Graduates, this is a typical example of what soft skills encapsulate. These soft skills could be inherent or acquired. It ranges from an exhibition of team spirit, communication skills, interpersonal skills, work ethics, sense of courteousness, adaptability, problem solving skills, confidence, presentational skill, time management, ability to listen, knowing when to speak and how to speak and what to speak about and in fact all the very little things we take for granted such as staying on our phones for long hours to the detriment of our work or studies.

Having acquired all the hard skills, let us remember that it is these soft skills that will separate us from our peers and propel us to the heights of the careers and various stages of social life that we dream of. In enhancing our soft skills, we learn precisely when to sympathize, empathize or criticize.

On this note, I would like to congratulate all you graduates once again. I wish you well in all your endeavours as you enter this wide world today

Congratulations! Felicitation! Ayekoo!

**VALEDICTORY ADDRESS BY EMMANUEL GYASI**  
**AT THE GREAT HALL UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
**FRIDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2019 (MORNING SESSION)**

The Member of Council Representing the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Members of the University Council, Pro-Vice Chancellors, Registrar, Members of College Advisory Boards, Distinguished Guest Speaker, Members of Convocation, Families and Friends, Fellow Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning.

I am honoured to address all seated here for this morning's ceremony. It is indeed a proud moment to be nominated as the representative of the eminent class of 2019 to deliver this valedictory address.

We are gathered here today not only for a graduation ceremony but to celebrate the completion of a worthy journey. This journey began with excitement over a text message that we had been accepted into the premier university, University of Ghana. Amidst all the joy, most of us were probably clueless of what was ahead. Maybe all we had in mind were the stories told of four years of magnificent party sessions in the university. Nevertheless, such hopes were quickly dashed by some of our lecturers who gave out assignments as early as the first day of class. Sooner than later, reality dawned on us. The path was going to be different from what our naive minds had envisaged.

Within some few months in the university, we learned to adjust to get over endless lectures, frightening IAs and examinations. We overcame these and many other challenges and by the time the first semester was over, we had a fair range of university standard vocabulary. Our use of terms like "credit hours", "UGRC", "MIS Web" and "GPA" were enough to show that we had indeed settled in our new environment.

After several lectures, class projects, last minute cramming sessions, examinations, fairytale relationships, we sit here today, adorned in our beautiful academic gowns. We await the official conferment of degrees as a testament that we have indeed undergone a transformative process and become part of a broader society from the hill of learning.

A hearty congratulation to all of us. We made it class of 2019! Each one of us!! Let us be proud of our achievement. Shall we give ourselves a round of applause!

The next step of our journey is not one for us to rest on our laurels. Instead, it is a period for us to let lessons learned from the past guide us towards becoming better versions of ourselves.

As we depart from the university let us know that we hold more than just degrees. Over the four years, we have acquired varied skills to make us valuable members of society. We have developed good social networks which will benefit us in the years ahead. Our participation in group projects while we were here means we are now ready to work in teams in the career world. The world outside will make demands on us, we should be prepared to meet them.

Fellow graduands, our generation is profoundly one of the most fortunate in history. The world around us has advanced so much you feel anything is possible. As we now find ourselves in the very system we have spent years critiquing, we owe it to ourselves and future generations to make a real difference, a difference that lies within our attitude.

Maya Angelou, the American poet and Civil Rights Activist said and I quote “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.” In our quest to be change agents we may feel powerless due to the nature of existing structures. However, if Maya Angelou’s words are anything to go by, we are never powerless to change our attitude. Essentially, what I am trying to drive home is the fact that the revolution we hope to see in Ghana starts right from us. It is not only an issue of proposing “the government must” kind of solutions to our problems. We as a people should be ready to shake off our apathy and in its place have a desire for nation building. We ought to uphold the values and principles of patriotism, honesty, diligence and accountability.

In our bid to become effective change agents, it is important we identify what we are passionate about. In the words of Frida Kahlo, a Mexican artist, “Passion is the bridge that takes you from pain to change”. Today we need to ask ourselves the following questions. What irks us so much? What can we not stand the sight of? Is it the traffic situation that nearly made some non-residential students miss IAs and examinations? Is it the poor sanitation situation that continues to expose us to a cocktail of diseases that stokes fire in some of us? Is it the child hawking on the street during school hours that hurts us? Finding answers to these questions and more will mean we have the needed catalyst to effect change. We have to channel all our efforts into correcting undesirable situations. We should be relentless in our strive till the status quo is altered.

In addition to the above, let us keep the following in mind. We are all born with our uniqueness, just thrive in yours. Never let fear of losing stop you for you are closer to success than you think. Never feel you are alone in this march to make things better. We are all in this together! Our individual change efforts are never too little to make a difference. For if we all do

something small, our combined efforts would eventually lead to something great, something our nation has longed for. We have a chance to make the Ghanaian narrative better, let us not miss it!

In doing all these we should also not lose sight of the things we love. Let us spend time with the family, listen to our favourite music, watch our beloved football team play, chill at the beach. Always take time off to relax and have some fun. Keep yourself energized so you are always raring to go.

As I come to the end of this speech and on behalf of the class of 2019, I express our profound gratitude to God for making this day possible. To our wonderfully supportive families, we appreciate you for the provision and sacrifices made for us throughout this academic journey. Special mention to my mum, you are my world! To our lecturers, university administrators, staff, and mentors we are grateful. Your efforts have shaped us into the people of substance you see here today. To our friends, the relationships we formed will transcend beyond today. It would have been impossible to have made it in this journey without each other. From our walks to lectures, group studies, times at the TV room cheering our favourite football teams, the times spent in worship, the fun we had during hall weeks and to our beans joint link ups, we made it out together. Finally, as we have reached this milestone in the pursuit of knowledge let us remember this guiding principle; that we create a better world and more importantly we proceed in integrity. Congratulations, class of 2019! Thank you for your attention.



**SPEECH BY GUEST SPEAKER - HON. ELIZABETH E. KNAUP**  
**AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2019 (AFTERNOON SESSION)**

Chairman of Council, Members of the University Council, Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Registrar, Provost and Deans, Members of the Advisory Board of the College of Humanities, Members of Convocation, Staff and Students, Alumni, Invited Guests, Members of the Press Corps, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

And most importantly, to the graduating class of the year 2019, for whom I am here today, I say CONGRATULATIONS.

**Georges Duhamel once said:**

**“We do not know the true value of our moments until they have undergone the test of memory”.**

When asked if I would be a guest speaker at the 2019 congregation, I was momentarily startled, quite scared, but immensely thrilled and I could not help it, but bask in the joy and excitement I presume all of you graduates must be feeling today.

You may all have different personal stories to tell, but I know that for some of you, the profound beginnings of your personal legends have been attained today. You may have come from backgrounds that when you set out, you were told it could not be done. You may have started from the bottom, but you are here now.

However, a wise man once said to me that potential is nothing, if it is not realised. You may have had a fine education, but what matters is what you do with it henceforth.

I sincerely wish that the import of this auspicious day is never lost upon any of you. As you go out into the “real world”, may you all never lose sense of who you really are, for it is pertinent to know thyself and nothing overmuch. Please strive to be open minded and tolerant of divergent opinions, but most importantly, conduct yourselves in a way and manner that you can always hold your heads high up and be able to call yourselves worthy alumni of the University of Ghana - Legon.

To my fellow Ladies, I am told that this year’s graduating class has a considerably higher number of females than past graduating classes, and for that I doff of my hat of Honour and say a big ‘Ayekoo’ to all of you.

**As Dr. James E. K. Aggrey said:**

**“if you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation”.**

I trust that the knowledge, skills and tools you have acquired here, would enable you navigate this life and prepare future generations for what lies ahead.

I am happy to be here and whilst I bask and share in your excitement, I cannot help but reminisce about my own life and a part of my journey and how far I have come. This is the beginning of 'real life'. Your life. Not your parents', your mentors', your idols', but your OWN life. And YES, it will be hard, even for those from privileged backgrounds. But with hard, also comes success, satisfaction, joy and happiness.

Some of you may be shy, outspoken, slow, loud, quiet, smart, intelligent. Some may have a few or all of those peculiar traits. You come from varied backgrounds. Some are from privileged homes, others from very simple homes. Some had it easy, others did not, but you have ALL achieved the same - You are graduates of this premier institution. This is an achievement every one of you must be proud of. But, do not forget, with this degree, comes invisible responsibilities, ethics, codes of honour, behaviour....

Looking back to when I started my journey of real life, there are three words that were and still are most important for everything I have done and still do. FAITH, PERSEVERANCE & PASSION. They have been the bedrock & the foundation of my real life. Do not give up when you know you are doing the right thing.

I want to share with you, one very crucial experience I had early into my studies that made me how I am, what I feel and how I think till today.

I had no financial support from home. I received DM 497,-/month stipend. My room was DM 500,-/month (the cheapest I could find), so you do the math.

I had to work part time whilst studying. At the beginning, it all went well. I worked as a waitress at a popular café, had office jobs filing documents, writing letters, printing, brewing coffee etc. Suddenly, everything went mute. It all stopped. Like a curse. Exams were coming up and I hadn't worked for about 3 weeks as I was busy preparing for my exams. My wallet was drying out like the Sahara Desert, as were the contents of my fridge and pantry. It was a very cold winter. Lots of snow and temperatures were -20 degrees celsius. I had every newspaper the city had to offer, reading through the job vacancy section for students. I called all advertised student jobs but nada,

niente, nothing. Absolutely no luck. To cut the story short, in the meantime I hadn't eaten for 6 days, in addition to that, I only had a day left for my phone to be disconnected for non-payment of the monthly bill. I was desperate! You can't imagine how much I prayed. I think I may have beaten the Pope in praying but without success.

I had a Russian friend who tried encouraging me to take unethical jobs. I declined. I said I would die of hunger rather than succumb to losing my faith! Of course I was absolutely in total despair. I was hungry, but my inner faith & strong will was stronger/resistant than anything. No food for 6 days. My luck: running tap water. At least I had water to drink!!!!

I remember on the 6th day, at around 16.45hrs I sat on my window sill and told myself "this is my last prayer", and I know HIM up there will hear me. I just knew it. I had this inner confidence. I even forgot for a moment how hungry I was. I made a call to this huge 'Industrial Group' that designed and manufactured glasses for most of the world's leading brands. I dialled and after what felt like a lifetime, someone answered. I told her I was calling for the student job vacancy. She said, sure come tomorrow morning at 09:00am.

My heart skipped a million beats, I screamed and fell on the floor thanking God. And then reality dawned on me. This place was outside the city I lived in. I needed to take the train. But I had no means to buy a ticket. So at 2am in the morning I packed my little bag with some makeup, a suit & nice shoes, dressed like an eskimo and set off by foot. After 4hrs I arrived. Frozen. My feet and fingers were in terrible pain from the cold. I was shaking and shivering. The security guard looked at me and thought I was some homeless person. I asked him to please allow me enter and use the bathroom as I had an appointment with Ms. M at 9am. Under normal circumstances, he would probably have sent me away, but I think he saw the desperation in my eyes and let me in. When I entered the washroom, it was like I had entered heaven. It was warm! I held my hands slowly under the luke warm running tap water to bring back the flow of blood into my practically frozen fingers. It was a little after 6am and the building officially opened at 7.30am.

Anyway, in a nut shell, I regained my self, cleaned up, dressed and waited till 8.45am. I went to the reception and presented myself for the appointment with the director of the department for Duty Free worldwide. I was led up to the waiting room and was cautioned, that 'the director was something else and that I should stay calm no matter what'. Honestly, I really did not need any such advice at that moment. On the other hand, it didn't really matter, nothing could've been worse than my last 7 hours. I had

planned every word, every move, etc.. Then, this beautiful, strict, executive looking woman, opens the door and ushers me in. I sat down, and it was the director herself. The only woman on the board of the firm and the only female director as well. She looked at me and I thought, to hell with my planned lies of telling her I wanted to try out something new and having experience etc.

I said, “Madam, I need this job or else I shall flunk my exams and die of hunger. Please hire me and I will do my best not to let you down. But I have to say, I have never done anything as per the expectations on the job requirements. You would need to teach me please”.

This supposedly heartless, childless, power woman looked at me and said: ‘Under normal circumstances, I would have walked you out. But, your honesty and sincerity tells me I should give you a chance. After the interview, she gave me a small cash advance payment, some tea and a sandwich - for me at that moment it was like eating fufu and lightsoup with prawns, lobster, fish, chicken, beef, wele and goat meat all together.

Till this day, ie. nearly 30 years on, I have not been in such dire financial straits again.

What did I learn from this? First and foremost, Faith & Perseverance! Honesty, authenticity, integrity, love. And most importantly, being yourself. Own yourself. Keep your ethics, your principles. Be true to yourself. No matter what. Do not succumb to anything you know deep in your heart is not right. Do not allow anyone to talk you into something you are not comfortable with.

Some of you will become corporate leaders, political leaders. Some will stay average, some will change professional directions, some may end up just being passive. But whatever you do, look deep within yourself and ask yourself, am I doing the right thing for myself and the people who look up to me. Those who sacrificed for me to come this far. You did not achieve today’s certificate on your own. Many believed in you, some visible, some invisible. Even if you think you sat and studied alone, or you wrote the exams yourselves. Keep in mind, someone sacrificed in one way or another for you to have the freedom of learning and writing.

Your success is the reward you will give to those who sacrificed for you.

Do not begin anything ONLY because of the financial benefit. It won’t go far. Remember my little story, I could have saved myself the hunger and painful walk by being unethical and earning well and fast, but would I have had this

inner satisfaction, pride and peace? No, I wouldn't have. I am sure if I wouldn't have stayed true to myself, I wouldn't be where I am today.

I became Ms. M's favourite P.A., even though I only worked part time, she would wait for me to organise all her important duties, trips, write ups. You name it.... I was more like a daughter than a secretary. She over paid me even though I made many mistakes at the beginning.

To my young ladies here, and I do see a lot of you, which makes me very proud. Note, it was a woman who lifted me. A woman who was known to be mean, hard, ruthless to all. This woman was one of the kindest I ever met. What I want to say is, Do not be prejudice towards other fellow women. Do not just practice gender equality on paper and do not only make use of it when it benefits you. Do not compete with one another. Support and help another. Bring one another up. Laws and ratios are fine, but it's the human mind, the human strength and the human love that makes the real difference. Ms. M could have seen me as a competitor. A young beautiful student. A future threat. No. she stood above such mediocre thinking/mindset. She was progressive and success driven. She saw the capacity in having a woman by her side who she could train to help her. She knew together we are strong. Divided we are weak. That's why she was so successful and unbeatable.

**In 1966, James Brown sang:**

**"This is a man's world, this is a man's world  
But it wouldn't be nothing without a woman"**

Throughout the world, the movement is on to bring more justice and equality between women and men.

Ladies and young men, we will and cannot reverse or undo what generations have believed in, and inbuilt in human society, but we can make a difference for us today and the future generations of tomorrow. For your younger siblings, your children....

Remember, the honour is in being the trailblazer who opens the path to others. The honour lies in being the builder who sinks the foundations and erects the pillars on which will rest the promises of tomorrow.

What I want, what I expect, what I hope, is that there are among you those who will heed the call and respond to it - This, my young ladies and gentlemen, applies to you all.

Ms. M was my angel sent from above in the form of a woman. Girls, be confident, be strong. Believe in yourselves. And you will have your angel.

After my initial studies I went on to do Art photography. Being creative was always my true passion. But I was brought up believing that being creative was only for the dreamers who would end nowhere. Against all odds, I pursued my passion in Art Photography. And because I wanted it so badly, I worked hard and passionately. I became the trusted person in Art for leading European families. I was entrusted with artwork worth hundreds of millions of USD. I traded with galleries and art collectors. This was all based on Integrity. I loved my job. And with this enthusiasm and giving my all 100% dedication, came financial freedom. I dived into this because I was passionate about it.

Throughout my “real life”, whenever I started something with absolute faith, perseverance and passion, it ended well. I owned it. I owned myself. I was myself and no one could distract my goal.

Yes, it will be hard and difficult. You will suffer blows and unfairness. You will meet failure in your career and possibly in your personal lives. But never give up. Like I didn't. Get up on your feet and walk again. You will be tested in different phases of your professional and private lives. I was tested. One of the tests was the 6 days no food & 4hrs of freezing walk in the dark cold. I was not an athlete nor anything close. My dear young ones. It was a hard one. But I did not give up! And for this I was rewarded.

My young graduates, you must always get up and try again. Believe in yourself as we believe in you and what you stand for; idealism, energy, optimism that anything and everything is possible when you set your mind on it. Persevere. Be passionate about what you do.

You are to build what tomorrow will be. This is not an abstract concept, this is a living practical reality. And only you will decide what it will be.

You are the bearers of your own optimism.

You might not be too conscious of this, but with this educational certificate, you embrace more than a profession. You will bring to our society order, structure and new ideas at a time when the powers of the world are tempted to turn their backs on the rule of law, ethics and principles for selfish short term interests.

For the law students, you will be called upon to be the pillars of the law. Yours will be to anchor even more firmly in our society its roots to make it grow and prosper. You are the gate keepers to and for us all.

And to all of you, find your niche and specialise in it. Be an expert in the subject or theme you are passionate about. Be skilled in a particular field. Become invaluable.

In this time of advanced social media, information and knowledge is available to all. The world today is filled with 'mini, pseudo' graduates. Netflix - on nearly everyone's phone or TV is filled with series/shows relating to many life topics. But experts are becoming rare. Be an expert, engage experts, create teams with experts.

Now, as you go out there, have the courage to shine. Let your light shine on the uncharted paths and courses that lay ahead and never hesitate to assist others to see their way out of darkness. Do not play small, shatter through that glass ceiling. And remember, what you do in this life, echoes in eternity.

Stand out and make your loved ones proud.

Ayekoo Class of 2019.

Thank you.