

CCAS Convocation Remarks: Dr. Kerric Harvey –May 15, 2010.

Hello, everybody -- **Don't you just LOVE graduation?**

I know I do.

And I am deeply, **deeply** honoured and moved to be your faculty speaker today. I will demonstrate my gratitude by being brief. Let me just tell you a very short story and two secrets.

First the story.

Every Halloween I challenge my students to dress up as some one – or **something** – that pertains to the class material.

Since I teach everything from Research Methods to New Media Technologies, it's a colourful experience. I've got **vivid** memories of debating Internet policy design with a young man sporting a tin foil satellite dish on his head, while several people dressed as cell phones listened avidly.

It's a lot of fun, a great community-builder, and as far as I know I've even managed to keep all of us off YouTube.

But here's the first secret.

If I'm going to ask them to dress up, then it seems only fair that I dress up, too. So once a year I put on my wizard hat and my Harry Potter tie and I trundle down to class as Hogwarts faculty.

And every one thinks I'm in costume.

And I am....and I'm not.

Because what we do here at George Washington University, what **you've** been doing for the last four years, is really, truly, magic. Magic at its best.

Because every single day, we walk into a classroom and when we walk out again we are different people. Maybe we haven't sprouted a satellite dish on

our head, but we've still experienced an important type of magic even if we don't realize it.

We have been transfigured by discovery.

Discovery of new ideas, new information, new ways of thinking. Discovery about each other, and about our invigorating differences. Discovery about how the world works, and our place within that glorious mystery we call "Life."

And most of all, discovery about ourselves.

We have changed, within and because of each other's company. And if that's not magic, then nothing is.

So **you** are capable of magic, which is a good thing to remember on the eve of graduation.

But besides the gentle alchemy of **education**, there's another kind of magic at work here, a moment of public transformation. It's a moment we have come to this weekend. We call it "commencement." And it's big.

Tomorrow you will take your life in your own two hands and make of it something new. You didn't get here alone; most of you had lots of help. Parents and family and spouses and partners, children and friends and fellow students and mentors and professors and university staff and administration and every single Starbuck's barista in Foggy Bottom helped to get you here.

But you did it. When all is said and done, maybe all of us helped, but you did it.

You are the George Washington University graduating class of 2010 and **YOU DID IT!**

You are incredible!

You are wonderful!

You are graduating tomorrow!

And because this is GW, most of you are **already** on LinkedIn!

And.....you are nervous.

You are nervous because tomorrow all your fiscal relationships suddenly change.

You are nervous because suddenly student loans are no longer theoretical money.

You are nervous because every one keeps telling you that there are no jobs.

You are nervous because on Monday you get drop-kicked into “real life.”

But here is Secret Number 2: **You are already in real life.** There’s no need to be afraid that you can’t deal with it, because you **have already been** dealing with it for years now.

I know because I have watched you do it.

I have watched you confront truly adult challenges despite this persistent myth that “school life” and “real life” are separated by a thick slab of insularity. I’ve seen you cope with illness and injury, with sudden loss and impossible schedules, with family catastrophes that assault your intellectual focus and crumble your financial resources. You’ve persevered through swine flu and crashing hard drives and blizzards and the recession.

And I have watched you not just survive all of this, but **thrive** in spite of it.

So don’t be afraid about Monday. On Monday you will still be the same resilient, resourceful, courageous problem-solving people that you’ve been for the years you spent with us. There’s nothing to be afraid of, on the other side of tomorrow’s great ceremony. There is only more to **discovered**.

You will find work, and you will find jobs. You will be well. And you will be GW university graduates! So wizard hats OFF to you!

Go out and **seize** that world, class of 2010, seize your life, in both hands. It's a big world. **Live a big life!** Don't let small problems, small people, or small minds shrink the size, the brightness, **the succulent variety** of your universe. Use both your heart and your head to navigate it. To savour it. To celebrate it. To make it a better place. A kinder place.

In short, make of your life a joyous riot, not only because joy is life's highest version of itself, but also because joy enriches society rather than depleting it.

And yes, it helps you perform better in job interviews!

So now go forth, set sail in curiosity and with wonder. I know I speak for all of us here at GW when I say "thank you from the bottom of my heart" for letting me – letting **us** -- have a hand in **your** great and miraculous voyage of discovery.

And here is a bonus secret, which is also a request.

Tomorrow is my birthday. Here's what I want for a present. I want you to go out and **devour** the rest of your life. I want you to go out and have a **BALL!**

Thank you and congratulations.