

*PRESIDENT JOHNSON:* Distinguished guests, esteemed faculty, families, and most importantly, the graduates of the class of 2024, it is with profound admiration that I address you today. As we gather here to celebrate your achievements, we do so with a deep appreciation for the commitment, sacrifice, and dedication that have brought you to this moment.

To the faculty and staff who have guided and supported these graduates along the way, I offer my deepest gratitude. Your mentorship, wisdom, and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

And to the families and friends who have stood by these graduates, thank you for your unwavering love, encouragement, and support. Your sacrifices and belief in their potential have been the driving force behind their success. Graduates, please stand and give your family, friends, and faculty a big round of applause!

In a world characterized by rapid change and unpredictable challenges, the pursuit of higher education transcends the mere acquisition of knowledge— it embodies a profound dedication to personal and professional advancement. As we acknowledge your achievements today, it is essential to recognize the immense sacrifices and tireless efforts that have shaped your educational journey.

From master's to doctoral degrees and juris doctorates, each of you has pursued your own path with diligence, perseverance, and dedication. For all of you in multiple ways, the quest for academic excellence has been intertwined with the complexities of life — juggling family obligations, navigating career aspirations, and confronting unforeseen obstacles.

Whether it was balancing the demands of parenthood while pursuing a degree, managing a full-time job alongside rigorous academic coursework, or navigating the challenges of part-time studies, your commitment to education has been unwavering.

Your journey has epitomized the essence of agility — an essential trait in maneuvering the intricacies of today's hyperconnected world.

In this ever-changing landscape, the ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn is the cornerstone of success. Your journey has been a testament to this philosophy. Each challenge you encountered served as an opportunity for growth and adaptation. As you stand on the precipice of the future, remember that agility is not just a skill — it is a mindset. It is the key to unlocking doors to new opportunities, overcoming obstacles, and thriving in an environment of constant change. Each assignment completed, each exam conquered, is a testament to your unwavering dedication and resilience.

Today, as we celebrate your accomplishments, we honor not only your academic achievements but also your unwavering commitment to self-improvement and the relentless pursuit of your dreams.

In an era where the value of higher education is often questioned, you, the graduates of the class of 2024, stand as a beacon of hope and inspiration.

Despite skepticism, you have chosen to invest in yourselves and your futures through these advanced degrees. You understand the intrinsic value of knowledge and the transformative power of education to shape not only your own lives but also the world around you.

It is worth noting the realities that you, as graduates with professional degrees, are poised to face. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers with graduate degrees had the lowest unemployment rates and highest earnings. The starting salary for individuals with professional degrees is significantly higher than those with only undergraduate degrees. On average, it takes graduates with professional degrees less time to find employment, reflecting the high demand for skilled professionals in today's job market. You are entering a world where your expertise is valued, and opportunities abound.

As you stand on the threshold of a new chapter in your lives, I urge you to embrace the future with confidence, courage, and optimism. Whether you choose to pursue careers in academia, research, law, medicine, or any other field, know that you are equipped with the skillset and the mindset to excel and make a meaningful impact on society. I am confident you will navigate the complexities of the world with grace and resilience. And we need you to.

In closing, I offer my heartfelt congratulations once again to the graduates of 2024. May you go forth with confidence, courage, and conviction, knowing that the world awaits your talents, your insights, and your contributions. Thank you.