

President And Ms. Samhat, Board of Trustees, honored guests, professors, families , friends and most importantly— graduates: I am honored to be here.

No doubt some of you out there are wondering: “Why in the world is she talking to us? Couldn’t they get someone better ?

But EVEN IF they HAD gotten someone famous and erudite and important- the fact remains: NO one remembers who SPOKE at their graduation.

Last year after I got the call asking me to speak to you today, I was with my friends the McClarys and Mannings.

You graduates know the McClarys daughter Marguerite and the Mannings son Lydon, because they’re both sitting right there. I was telling Marguerite and Lydon that I’d been asked to be y’alls speaker.

When Margarites mom heard me, she laughed so hard she spit out her drink. On me.

But She quickly rebounded by remarking that **at least Marguerite and Lydon** would remember who spoke at THEIR graduation.

THAT IS some consolation.

The good news is:

* I am not gonna harp on how much time you spend on social media. Not one word. (if needed: Put that thing away)

*And I'm not gonna use quotes that only the English or Philosophy majors understand.

*The best part -- I'm going to make this the shortest graduation speech in history!

The bad news? I don't have time to mention:

-my mentors :Dr. Dobbs, Leonard , Dr Hubbard and Patton. -

Nor John Cobb the late great English professor.

I don't have time to tell you about what CHAOS this place was when the Lesenses and Maultsbys ran the school, before David Beacham and Roberta Bigger took over.

As for y'all--- I'm Not gonna mention your sports or academic achievements because there are too many.

I'm not mentioning statues or stadiums or EVEN Ms.

Richardson's Arts center.

Not even gonna mention Mr Millikens tress. Sorry.

So... what should I say to make you remember this? My story's not particularly inspiring. I was lucky to be born into a wealthy family. And luckier, still, to find my passion early: **I always wanted to be a doctor. And I am passionate about that.**

But passion means nothing without persistence. If you're passionate about something, you need to keep at it. Stay with it.

One of my heros was a guy named Albert Schweitzer. He was a Swiss concert pianist who left his comfy life in Switzerland and started a hospital in Africa. He was a true humanitarian. He was

also good for lots of quotes we can all understand. Here's one of them.

“Success is not the key to happiness, Happiness is the key to success. IF you love what you are doing, you will will be successful “

For many years, I worked a hospital named for Albert Schweitzer in Haiti. I fell in love with it, but let me tell you, staying in love with it was hard.

It was hot, poor, and smelled like a sewer. A lot of the time, there was no electricity. Forget about air conditioning. I was on a first name basis with the tennis ball sized tarantulas in my bedroom .

I was lucky enough, though that may be the wrong word- to get to treat TB, AIDS, malaria, Cholera and a host of other exotic diseases.

But I was also physically threatened, tear gased, put in jail, lied to, spit on, and most horridly—I had to watch patients die of gross neglect. BUT I had small victories:

*The countless times I stayed up all night to titrate a drip for woman with heart failure, and was then able to see her hold her baby and walk out alive.

*The 100s of nights I drug myself out of bed to check a potassium on a kid with diabetic ketoacidosis, and a week later see him playing soccer.

I had my passion, but without persistence, it would have been pointless.

During some of those endless, trying days at the Hospital Scwhweitzer, I would go sit by a rock in the middle of a garden in the hospital. On it was a quote by Dr. Schweitzer:

“YOU CAN’t save the world today, but today you CAN make one patients life easier “

Not everyone can win court cases, save lives, build cancer centers, be artistic, fight for their country, write books, play pro ball or win survivor. But EVERYONE of you CAN make a difference to someone, every day. Little victories are important.

My late friend Allison Nation, a Wofford parent twice, was talking to my mom one day after I had just come back from Liberia, treating Ebola.

My mother said to her: “Well Allison WHAT DO You DO all day long while Katy is off saving the world??”

Allison replied without skipping a beat...“Miz Close, some people were put on earth to go off and save the world, some people were put on earth to make cocktails for them when they come home”

On the theme of cocktails, I mentioned my friend Salters – Marguerite’s dad -- a moment ago. We were here together. Not exactly saving humanity. Or anything else.

What saved US?

Passion.

Mine for medicine, his for a converse girl- Woofie Knight.

Salters and Woofie settled in Pawleys - And back then it wasn't known as some kind of Ground Zero of entrepreneurial passion. They had a passion for food and drink. He and Woofie bought an old grocery store at the main intersection.

Through hard work and long days and nights, they turned it into a world-class restaurant. Salters learned the construction business and how to build a pizza oven. Woofie learned how to cook and run a kitchen.

Were they born knowing these things? Did they learn these things in college?

NOT a chance. They had to figure it out . It's not enough just to have passion and be persistent , you also need to continue to learn. Wofford only started your education. While 2/3 of you will eventually go to graduate school, that isn't the only way to continue your education, Life is continuing ed, don't ever think you know enough.

The McClarys , like many many other Wofford graduates, also participate in another great Wofford tradition, they know their obligation doesn't end at their doorstep. You can find them **WORKING** at most every charity event in the area.

The the great American educator, Horace Mann said:
“Be ashamed to die , until you have won some victory for humanity”

As Wofford graduates we have all been given a great deal, and as the saying goes- to those given a lot, a lot is expected.

.Wofford graduates EVERYWHERE know that success is also defined by giving back to the community.

I was fortunate to get to know a great lady who gave a great deal to her community and our country-- Barbara Bush. She passed just a year ago. She was the wife of a president and a mother of a president, a distinction she shares with just one other woman, Abigail Adams.

Both Mrs. Bush and my mom left Smith college after WW II in order to marry the men they loved. That meant not graduating. That was the rule then.

They weren't allowed **to think they could have it all.**

In 1976 this school made a decision to become completely coeducational. My mother was put on the board here to help smooth that transition.

At 93, she is mother of 8, grandmother of 29 and great grandmother of 20. She swims three miles a week, travels extensively and rides a bike and her horse. She is here today. She is the epitome of persistence , has a lifelong love of learning and passion for giving back. She was the reason, or at least some small part , that Wofford has been able to embrace change. My mom, Anne Springs Close.

In 1982, as a woman here, I was a minority in the science department. While no one told us we could have it all, **we were at least allowed to TRY to have it all.**

Ten years after that, in the early 90's, Mrs. Bush was invited to give the commencement talk at Wellesley, the women's college outside Boston.

Some of the students protested. They felt she shouldn't be allowed to speak because she was -- quote -- "Just a wife"

Wiser heads prevailed and Mrs. Bush ended up speaking. as she closed her speech she said:

"At the end of your life, you will never regret NOT having passed one more test, NOT winning one more verdict, or NOT closing one more deal. You WILL regret time NOT spent with a husband, a child, or a parent."

Family is important. Your families have sacrificed to get you here and keep you here and you owe them gratitude. But here at Wofford you have gained another family. The people sitting with you. **They may not look like you, but hopefully they have enlarged your world, your mind and your heart.** Your fellow alums will continue to surprise and delight you if you choose to stay engaged with them.

Wofford was all white until 1964 when Albert Grey enrolled. This brave man went on to serve in Vietnam, graduate and be on the Wofford Board of trustees. While Wofford was the first private school in the state to enroll A.A.s, we still have a way to go.

There may not be cowardly people , faces obscured, in white robes and pointy hats walking among us but the country we live in today STILL has people who let HATE define them, and terrible things still happen, as they did in Charleston and Charlottesville.

You may have been sheltered from that ugliness here, but you won't always be.

BUT....you CAN help change that , because.....

You've been fortunate.

---**Fortunate** to have been in this idyllic setting where things like that may seemed a world away,

-- **Fortunate** enough to now have a voice that can speak up LOUDLY for injustices in this world, against HATE and inequality,

----- **You are fortunate to have made friendships** with a diverse group of people you might never have known, broadening your horizons,

--**You are fortunate** enough to be given advantages that most people in the world never have dreamed of.

--**AND you are fortunate enough** to believe YOU CAN have it all.

And I'm fortunate to have been given the honor of telling the Wofford Class of 2019 to go out there, use your VOICE, find your PASSION, and -- kick butt!