

Thank You Dean Phillips for the kind introduction.

To Chancellor Sobolik, the provost, Dean Phillips, associate deans, faculty, staff, distinguished guests, families and most importantly the graduates – I am truly humbled and honored to share in this commencement ceremony.

So how did my UMSL journey start...

As I started looking for colleges to attend, my dad had recently lost his job. I was dating my high school sweetheart and now wife of 36 years, Carol. I was working. I chose UMSL because it provided me access to an outstanding education that I could personally pay for. So, I joined UMSL in August of 1983 as a first-generation college student. I graduated with my undergraduate in 1986 and MBA in 1995. UMSL educates St. Louis and UMSL educates how businesses operate.... Collaboratively and where teamwork is essential. As a previous employer of UMSL students, I can assure you UMSL provides work ready graduates.

UMSL prepared me for my professional career, and it is why I give back to UMSL. I recently reflected on my involvement with the university and discovered that I have spent just under 50% of my life engaged in one way or another with this great university. I encourage you to do the same. Be a part of the legacy of this great institution and give back.

I would like to share three images or themes with you tonight.

First image....(REMEMBER)

Recently, I discovered three papers I had written as an 18-year-old student here at UMSL. They were assignments from Mr. Barrett's English 10 class. One of the papers was entitled: Portrait of a Man, another, Dedication and the other, Self Interview.

I remember writing about my father's hands and the tangible evidence of hard work and sacrifice to provide for his family. He worked in the automotive business; was a high school graduate; and was able to put me and my brothers through private high school.

I remember writing about my high school football coach...how he took us from a two-win season my junior year to the state championship game my senior year. I wrote: "I now believe that if a person works hard at and becomes dedicated to any goal , he/she can achieve it"

The key lessons I documented in these papers that still hold true today.

- Importance of family and my faith
- My unsatiable desire to succeed
- The value of hard work, dedication, and self-discipline in achieving my goals.

I remember my first day of work. My boss met me at the door. He noticed my new suit. He said...son you better cut that tag off your coat sleeve before you walk upstairs, or they will never let you live it down. Appearance matters I guess

I remember growing up at Boeing from a twenty-one-year-old finance new hire to becoming the finance leader of global business.

I mostly remember developing teams and working with them to solve complex business problems and forge new relationships across the globe.

Take time to remember and reflect often. Your memories are different than mine, but they are what have shaped you into the person you are right now... sitting right here in this building. They are foundation that will help you navigate future opportunities and challenges.

Next image....(CELEBRATE)

This is a world class institution. You can look across the numerous awards, accreditations, national rankings as proof positive. Not only have you navigated the challenges of a global pandemic but also the rigor of completing your studies at UMSL. CONGRATULATIONS! You should be very proud of what you have accomplished.

I challenge you to celebrate your successes and your disappointments as you continue forward.

I have had many successes over my career but some of the most defining moments in my life have been learning from disappointments. I will never forget the first time I disappointed a boss. I vowed to never let it happen again.

In St. Louis, we are certainly a sports town. We celebrate success on the field. We give standing ovations when our favorite player hits a homerun at Busch stadium, makes an unbelievable goal for the Blues, or win championships. We **CELEBRATE** these accomplishments.

Tonight, we celebrate you the graduating class of 2022. You have accomplished something very special. I would like to ask every family member, member of the platform party, faculty, and staff, to rise and give these 2022 graduates a standing ovation. They have earned it!!!!

Final Image (Make A Difference).

As Nelson Mandela once said, "We can change the world and make it a better place. It is in our hands to make a difference."

In my life's journey to this point, my one constant mission is to make a difference. It is simple, but true. It is not good enough to simply participate....effort is necessary but insufficient...results and outcomes matter.

I challenge you to ask these questions of yourself often.

- Are you positively impacting the lives of the people around you?
- Are you positively impacting the organizations, you chose to be a part of?
- Are you curious?
- Are you continuously learning?
- Are things better because you have been a part of them?

You are the people who will determine how our society responds to our current challenges.

Own it!

At a College of Business Advisory Board meeting this past Monday, the dean invited several students to come and discuss their time at UMSL. The energy of every one of the students was contagious. One of your colleagues graduating with you tonight, Sara Frederickson, said..." I can't wait to sit in this room in the future and make an impact on people's lives like all of you have!" That is your assignment!

In summary, I challenge you to

**REMEMBER and REFLECT OFTEN,
CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS, and
ALWAYS STRIVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

On behalf of the University of Missouri–St. Louis, all of your loved ones that are here today - congratulations class of 2022. God bless you and take care of yourself and those around you.

Thank you so much