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COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

by

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Secretary General

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

2012 COMMENCEMENT

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President Mark W. HUDDLESTON,

Distinguished members of the faculty and administration,

Dear family members, loved ones and friends of the Class of 2012,

Most importantly, dear Class of 2012, including the daughter, Allie, and niece, Kiley, of a classmate and closest friend of mine, Dr. John Kovalik.

It is a true honor to be back here, and congratulate the almost 4,000 of you on one of the most memorable days of your lives.

I was expecting not to recognize UNH upon my return after so many years. Despite the extraordinary progress I witnessed including the magnificent Peter T. Paul School of Business and Economics under construction, it took only a few minutes for me to feel the same warmth and support that I remember from when I was a student.

President Huddleston, the administration, faculty and students remain committed to excellence of the highest order.

Let me say thank you to UNH. Because of the support of its administration, faculty and my classmates, I have been able to live my dream, and I am confident that one day you too will feel the same way.

Now, for my remarks:

In Jessica's perfect introduction, she ignored most of my resume to get to my core as a person...to find out what is inside me.

That's precisely my first advice to you, the Graduates of the Class of 2012.

You will be soon choosing the people with whom to spend your lives and to develop your career. Look for what's inside them.

Select those who are passionate in what they do, not passionate about how much they earn. Doing so will help you find that flame that burns inside you.

Some of those people will dedicate themselves to protect and serve others. Some will even sacrifice their lives so you can maintain your quality of life.

These are the men and women that INTERPOL remembers at its most important meetings – and whom I would like to commemorate this morning.

This simple act of remembrance will have particular significance here and today: only a few weeks ago, Greenland Police Chief, Michael Maloney, was tragically killed in a shootout while trying to protect his police colleagues. The murderer also made another victim and wounded others including a member of the University of New Hampshire Police, Eric Kulberg.

So, please join me in an INTERPOL tradition, and if you can, please stand for a minute of silence to remember Chief Maloney and all the officers worldwide who have sacrificed their lives to protect others.

Thank you.

The past 60 seconds give you insight into me.

Representing the brave men and women in the police services of 190 member countries, and devoting myself to preventing crime and tracking down terrorists and fugitives around the world are what fill me with passion.

To understand why, I need to bring you into my world - to the nerve center of INTERPOL Headquarters.

I chose a typical 24-hour period - the day just before I left France to be with you. A day like any other that may result in dramatic changes in the lives of many throughout the world.

Lives that we hope a single arrest can protect: an alleged murderer and kidnapper possibly hiding in Pakistan, thousands of miles away from authorities in Belgium; violent fugitives believed to be in Russia, Oman, Paraguay and Turkey. Suspected terrorists travelling across Europe, South and Central Asia.

Lives that may be at risk, unless we and our police colleagues around the world act fast against the threat of an armed European anarchist group, or the threat that 120 violent escaped prisoners still on the loose in Cote d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Cambodia and Peru pose to innocent citizens whose paths they cross.

And finally, a single life we are simply praying to find and save, after a young woman goes missing in the Philippines.

These 24 hours tell you the tale of INTERPOL – a tale that never stops. Each and every day somewhere in the world, INTERPOL’s assistance is demanded or offered.

I know what you are probably asking yourselves now: “Isn’t he supposed to be making us feel good about stepping out into the real world – instead of filling Memorial Field with an air of gloom and doom”?

Don’t worry: you are not alone. Back in 1995, I understood what some people think when they see me. Following the Oklahoma City bombing, a suicide plane crash at the White House and other incidents affecting the security of the President, I was regularly on television trying to reassure the American public or provide updates to the media as Undersecretary for Enforcement at the U.S. Treasury Department.

It was then that I learned a lesson from my 5-year-old niece, Veronica, who now is a proud Wildcat in the Class of 2014. One day, she stormed into the bathroom, calling frantically for her father, my brother - also a Wildcat - while he was shaving. Veronica screamed: "Daddy, Come quick, hurry, hurry, something bad must have happened because Uncle Ronnie's on television again."

As INTERPOL Secretary General, I am still called upon to focus on the dark side of the world... but not today.

Today, I will speak about another world. The world that I have experienced over almost 12 years while visiting 153 of INTERPOL's 190 member countries...the real world that awaits you!

It's a world that won't receive sensational headlines in the media. But venture into it, and your eyes will open in

amazement; your thinking will be changed forever and you will come back home a better person.

A world that has exceptional offerings, of which I have gotten only a glimpse. Yet each of them, I cherish every single day.

Now, I want to share these experiences with you. Wildcat to Wildcat.

Visit a country with only 800 inhabitants, stretching within only a fifth of a square mile, but able to impact the lives of 1.1 billion people globally like the Vatican.

If size matters, visit the world's largest country, the Russian Federation, and take in some of the greatest museums, galleries, performing arts and architectural wonders.

Make your way to China and see how its 1.3 billion people are facing the same challenges as you, at home, in schools, in businesses, in health and security.

If you think that that country is facing a challenge protecting its borders and citizens, just land in Indonesia... after picking any one of its 17,000 islands spread across the ocean.

Walk the streets of Papua New Guinea, which I will do this year where 800 different languages are spoken.

Find out for yourselves why learning a foreign language will re-shape your mindset forever.

Travel to Africa's southernmost point and see the dramatic impact of the Atlantic and Indian oceans as they converge.

If you want to have your breath taken away, stand on the side of the Grand Canyon and be reminded of the U.S.'s majestic beauty.

If you want to see the capacity of humankind to create opportunities for growth and development, then visit the Panama Canal.

But don't take my word for it, on any of this; do not take anyone's word for it, whether online or offline.

That's precisely my second message to you.

See what's out there for yourselves. Dive into it. Feel it on your skin. Touch it. Inhale it. Lose yourself in it. It will change you forever.

During my time as Secretary General, I have seen natural beauty you can't even imagine; listened to exquisite music on instruments that I'd never even heard of; seen art from both young and old, male and female; experienced a thousand years of wisdom by human beings in healing one another; tasted cuisine that would make your mouths explode with pleasure.

I have been exposed to the cultural heritage of so many nations; witnessed Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindi, Buddhists living, working and worshipping side-by-side; been invited to a Seder in Israel and Ramadan fast breaking in Pakistan, Iran and the United Arab Emirates; and I've even meditated and practiced yoga in India's Himalayan mountains.

I've travelled to Thailand, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Maldives when INTERPOL assisted these countries in identifying the thousands of victims of the 2004 tsunami, and I've helped INTERPOL organize global manhunts for two of the world's most notorious pedophiles, arrested in Thailand and the U.S. respectively.

I've met and been blessed by Popes; cardinals; bishops and priests. Shook hands with Mother Teresa; watched Nelson Mandela speak in support of INTERPOL; spoke German with then Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in a one-on-one meeting; met every US president since Jimmy Carter except one

and have given a presentation to more than 50 Heads of State and Government from around the world.

And – believe it or not - I’ve even seen Republicans and Democrats get along, say kind things about and support one another in public.

Why am I sharing so many personal experiences with you this morning? Because in 1979, when I was sitting where you are, anxious to grab that degree in my hands, I had no idea of what life had in store for me.

Yet, all this and more – is awaiting you out there. All is within your grasp. The only limitations on your dreams are those set by you.

I know what you must be thinking: “Easy for you to say; you’re Secretary General of INTERPOL.”

Well, I am going to ask you to do something for me.

Close your eyes.

Imagine that those words I just pronounced were the words of somebody else. The words spoken by 9-year old Ronnie Noble, while cleaning floors and bathrooms after school side-by-side with his father in the family business.

Jessica mentioned how my father essentially obtained my breakthrough job as a law clerk for a federal judge. You might have missed it.

Well, one midnight, after work, he drove to that famous judge's, the late A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.'s, home in Philadelphia; he slid my resume under the door with a message attached, telling him that if he hired me, I would make his career successful!

Two years later, Judge Higginbotham told me that the reason he selected me was because of my father's act of love that night.

My father's belief in and devotion towards me showed Judge Higginbotham that I had to have qualities in me somewhere worth nurturing - which the judge did.

So, as you can see, I believe in the power of parents' love for and devotion to their children. It is the one bond that unites us despite our nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, or economic status.

Over my entire professional career, this is the only key speech I have given without my parents being present...the only one.

My father is almost 89, and he just can't take traveling like he used to. My mother, with him for almost 60 years, can't bear

the thought of leaving him alone...not even to see her son give the most important speech of his life.

But they are here inside me; like yours are inside you. 33 years later, they share at least one thing in common with your parents, family, and loved ones, as well as with the faculty and administration of UNH. That's the pride we have in all of you...the Graduates of the Class of 2012.

This is my final message to you. Each of the speakers today made reference to the importance of family. Their love and support will be the one constant in your life.

Your family through birth and marriage, and your family of Wildcats will be there in person or in spirit at each step of your journey. Our pride in all of you knows no limits and is not linked to any particular job or endeavor you undertake.

Now, throughout your journey in the real world that awaits you, I want you to make the world your canvas. Make your decisions and beliefs the strokes that will paint a unique picture. That of a life that must be yours only, and never someone else's...a life lived to the fullest.

Anything is possible if you want it bad enough, work hard enough and are filled with the passion and determination to achieve it.

And hopefully, along the way, you will realize - as I have - that any achievement only finds its true meaning the moment you share it with your family and loved ones.

My dear Class of 2012,

You have come all this way from 29 different states around the country, and from 24 nations all over the world; studied and worked hard for years for this moment.

Get ready!

It will soon be time for you to turn those tassels.

Time for you to take your first leap as graduates from UNH into the bright and beautiful world that awaits you.

Go get'em Wildcats, and Godspeed.

Thank you all.