

Stockton Celebrates New Graduates and University as 'Family' at December Commencement

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News and Media**

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“Now, here comes the advice,” she said.

- Stay in the family business: “Your Stockton family is in the learning business! Keep learning about things that interest you, that are important to you and most importantly about yourself. ... You will be so much more powerful if you know why you believe the things that you do, your strengths, areas where you need support and if you know your emotions. As you learn about you, learn to appreciate the perspectives of others who have had different experiences, backgrounds, and skills.
- Uphold our family values: “Excellence is our minimum standard! You are from a family with a reputation for excellence and the Stockton name obligates you to do your best work.”
- Don’t forget where you came from: “We want to know how you are doing, and we need the richness of your experiences to motivate your siblings who are still here.”
- Enough is enough: “In the areas of achievement, excellence, learning, and growing there should be no limits on your aspirations; always go all out for the best that you can do. However for balance, I will pass on my grandmother’s wish for me each semester that I left for school. She always said, ‘I wish you enough.’ Enough love to keep you feeling secure. Enough challenges to stimulate and motivate you. Enough failures to make you humble. Enough success to give you confidence.

Gonsalves quoted writer Alex Haley as saying, “in every conceivable manner, the family is a link to our past, a bridge to our future.’

“Today, that bridge is more important than ever before. It is the bridge of family that can be counted on to withstand waves of change buffeting your life, your nation and your planet. ... A wonderful future is ahead of you. And your family, as always, is behind you every step of the way,” she said. “Congratulations, graduates; you have made your Stockton family proud!”

President Harvey Kesselman offered graduates “a few choice nuggets of advice that I believe can best serve you on your new journey.”

“The first, from Ellen DeGeneres, is: ‘Follow your passion, stay true to yourself, and never follow someone else’s path. Unless you’re in the woods. And you’re lost. And you see a path. Then by all means you should follow that.’

“Second, ‘Lost time is never found again,’ coined by Benjamin Franklin. So choose to make the most of your moments.

“And last, but certainly not least, understand this critical life lesson, authored by John Maxwell, which says ... ‘Life is a matter of choices, and every choice you make, makes you.’

“From the moment you decided to choose Stockton, you joined a group of people, a second family, if you will, who were and still are, committed to your success. At Stockton, we fully believe in these words, ‘plant yourself where you can grow,’ which to us is much more than a motto. It is a call to action. It is an expectation. But most important, it is a choice. It is a choice that landed you here today,” Kesselman said.

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“As you move toward the next phase of your life, whether it’s graduate school, pursuing volunteer service, establishing a career, and/or starting a family, you will face many life-altering choices.... When you are called to make those transformational choices, remember who you are and who you’ve become since your time here at Stockton University,” he continued.

“Let the spirit of Osprey pride help you to soar beyond the ordinary and to reach the heights of the extraordinary. Let it encourage and empower you to stake claim to your calling. Let all the knowledge, wisdom, civic mindfulness, and social consciousness that have been poured into you become the foundation that anchors your decisions.”

Kesselman talked about the importance of community service and helping others, in addition to pursuing financial success.

“Just remember, graduates: Making a dollar enriches you; making a dif01.6(i)13.5(m)-5.(ac)-2(e)0., ,fe andpoh

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Kesselman and Trustee Bailey