

00:06

- Thank you, Dean Toyoda.

00:08

Good evening all, and congratulations

00:10

to the 2020 Suffolk University graduates.

00:14

What a way to celebrate this achievement

00:16

in Boston's legendary ballpark.

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We can all say we graduated during a global pandemic

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where toilet paper was as valuable as gold.

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But in the end of this pandemic,

00:29

our degrees are more outstanding.

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We not only have Suffolk University

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on our LinkedIn accounts, but now we have Zoom university.

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It is a great feeling seeing you all here today,

00:42

considering the last time we met as a class

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was at Bell In Hand, our hundred day remaining

00:48

till graduation celebration,

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shortly before our lives were forever changed.

00:54

Working in the hospital industry, studying for a master's

00:58

in Healthcare Administration at Suffolk University as well,

01:02

I first want to celebrate those who are able to

01:05

give our class, Suffolk's class of 2020,

01:08

the opportunity to graduate in-person.

01:12

Healthcare heroes, frontline workers, volunteers,

01:17

educators, and researchers.

01:21

Please join me in applauding all these heroes

01:24

whose efforts have allowed us to celebrate

01:27

with our families and our friends today.

01:30

(crowd applauding)

01:39

My dad taught me,

01:40

no matter what life throws in your way, keep going.

01:44

Born in Belgium with a goal, but less than \$500

01:48

in his pocket, he took a leap of faith to start a career

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with learning a new language as well.

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My dad became an executive chef

01:57

in the World Trade Center and many well known hotels.

02:01

And now, for the last 19 years,

02:03

has co-owned a restaurant with my mom.

02:06

With a family life lesson of persistence,

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I was able to do just that as a first-generation graduate.

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We, the class of 2020, started our journeys at Suffolk

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separate but together.

02:21

Some of us came in as grad students.

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Some of us came in as transfer students.

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Some came in as freshmen boasting our yellow t-shirts

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through the bustling streets of Boston.

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We found new ways to adjust to the life.

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We all then learned that the best Sodexo food

02:39

was made by Maria in 73 Tremont.

02:43

(chuckling)

02:45

(crowd applauding)

02:47

And we also went to the Involvement Fair

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where there were one too many people on Somerset's Plaza,

02:52

now known as Samia.

02:54

That fair introduced me to many of you

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and all your diverse backgrounds and goals.

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I got involved and became a leader

03:01

with the Suffolk Dance Marathon,

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benefiting Boston Children's Hospital,

03:06

The Honors Council, Wicked's hip hop dance team

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and the women's club lacrosse team.

03:13

My sophomore year, I felt disconnected, moving off campus,

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something many of you probably experienced.

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With the help of off-campus housing

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and President Kelly, my colleague Brian Hatch and I

03:26

were able to create the commuter student lounge

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which serves about 75% of the student population at Suffolk.

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My takeaway would be to highlight

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the importance of connections.

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Whether you found your connections

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with athletics, service work, or your classes,

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Suffolk University has linked you to fellow graduates,

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faculty and staff.

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You're graduating from an institution that will support you

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and your education with a well-developed alumni network,

04:00

which has led me to my current job today.

04:04

My second takeaway for you during these unprecedented times,

04:06

remember to never step back and always be bold and brave.

04:12

My dad faced numerous challenges, and I know we all have.

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For me, one challenge was learning to adjust

04:19

to college with dyslexia.

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More recently, another challenge was having a hundred

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plus job applications I made, returned with the message

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we are unable to move forth with your application

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due to COVID-19.

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How many of you had experienced this?

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(giggling)

04:39

Frustration I don't even think emphasizes our feelings.

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Or maybe it was being mailed the diploma last spring

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and having mixed emotions,

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knowing we would not have a graduation at that time,

04:51

or say goodbye to our friends and professors.

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But Suffolk taught us differently.

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As Rams, we persevere through these challenges.

05:01

We, as a Ramling, are motivated and ambitious.

05:06

We adjust to what is thrown in front of us

05:08

like we did when we started our education in this big city.

05:12

For me, my persistence meant continuing my education.

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For you, persistence could be something different.

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But now we have the skills to make change

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through difficult times.

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Again, thank you to our healthcare heroes

05:29

and Suffolk University faculty and administration trustees

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for providing our class of 2020

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with this commencement ceremony

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in this beautiful Boston landmark.

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Everyone, stay healthy and safe.

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Graduates, aspire, lead, and create change.

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I congratulate you all again

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and wish you all the very best.

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Cheers to you all and play ball.

05:55

(crowd applauding)

English