

**Suffolk University Sawyer Business School
Class of 2020 Commencement
Sunday, May 23, 2021
Fenway Park
Graduate Student Speaker
Robert Osgood, EMBA '20**

So how nice is it to finally be off mute? [LAUGHTER]

Members of the Board of trustees, President Kelly, Dean Zeng, distinguished faculty, invited guests, fellow graduates, and most importantly, families. Wow. What a year.

And yet, here we all are in solidarity, united as students by our tenure in the classroom and bonded as individuals by endurance of this past year. And so while we may be in these seats a year late, we are far from a year behind.

As the graduating Class of 2020, we're blessed with being equipped with tools like no other class, armed with knowledge bestowed on us from one of the finest institutions this city has to offer. But we're also fused by an exclusive camaraderie in the very reason why our diplomas were mailed to us. We received a Suffolk education that was complemented in a way we could never expect. We, together, if we are open to it, experienced an extraordinary education in personal strength.

I believe that every adversity is truly an opportunity, and so here, in the most challenging of years, in the very cause why smiles of celebration are shielded by facial protection, we have grown exponentially. A year of loss and uncertainty, injustice and confusion. But if there is nothing more that we carry from our unison at Suffolk, let it be this: that fear and inequality are vanquished by knowledge and love and integrity and, of course, solidarity.

It's finding the opportunity to collectively be better and stronger and wiser in the face of bias and sickness and terror. Our time at Suffolk, combined with our personal individualized growth experiences of 2020, has taught us to be beacons of hope and truth and equity and to seek to understand, seeing every adversity as opportunity.

Opportunity. See, I'm a hospice administrator. In my work, I have the unique privilege to be with the terminally ill in their final moments. And in that sacred time that I've been humbled to be a part of so many times, no one has ever told me about what they wished they didn't do. Only what they wished they had done. They wished they took that trip. They should have made amends with that person. They should have got that degree. They should have said what they felt. They should have started that business. They should have told that person they loved them.

They should have told that person they loved them.

As I think of all these scenarios and all these individuals whose time, like all of us, was limited, I've learned that one of the greatest tragedies in life is missed opportunity. If 2020 teaches us anything, it's that our greatest gift of all is time. And it's only enhanced when we cherish it together and use it for the betterment of one another. The time is now to choose the kinds of leaders we want to be, leaders who choose inclusion, leaders who choose kindness, who choose to open our hearts, leaders who choose to love unconditionally and unforgivingly.

So here we are as graduates from the most Boston of all schools, in the most Boston of all places, hallowed ground here in the Commonwealth, a place where greatness is celebrated nightly under these very lights, a place like Suffolk that has helped to forge the heart and craft the Boston Strong fabric of this fine city, a place that has exalted the gods of the game and teaches us that in every day of our lives, just like the game, no matter the odds, you can come back to beat the Yankees after being down by seven in the seventh. [APPLAUSE]

[HUMS "SWEET CAROLINE"] I'm not going to do the whole song. It's just too hot. [LAUGHTER]

Here under the Citgo sign, we learn that sometimes if you time it just perfectly, the right play at the right fraction of a second can change the whole course of fate. And like this place has showed us countless times, sometimes we have to go into extra innings to be victorious.

But it's in those late hours of darkness, when we're physically exhausted and emotionally taxed, that we summon the fire deep in our hearts and see that's the very time where champions are crafted. This field is proof that in times like we find ourselves in now, in this light of dawn after 2020, when we need one another the most, that we can rise as a team and make a pledge of hope to each other.

And so I implore you to savor this moment and this day, savor your accomplishments and your victory from a socially distant 2020, but also see the opportunity before you to share the empowerment that this year has afforded you. You have learned to find comfort in uncomfotability and to find the light inside you to benefit others. The Class of 2020 has learned to find cohesion amidst confusion, and through each other appreciate the most precious of all commodities, time.

And so now, here, a year late but far from a year behind, may we find solidarity further in the opportunity to serve this fine city, this commonwealth and beyond as proud members of an elite group of honored professionals, fortunate enough to have spent this time together in the greatest city in the world, and blessed to bear a common alumni name of Suffolk.

And oh, yeah, most importantly, in every opportunity, virtually and especially not, don't forget to always take yourself off mute.

Thank you for this honor. Congratulations everybody. [APPLAUSE]