

Judith Lima
President, UMass Dartmouth Alumni Association
Remarks to 109th Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony
May 24, 2009

Welcome Chancellor MacCormack, President Wilson, Distinguished guests, family, friends, and most importantly, welcome 2009 graduates.

It is indeed an honor for me to stand before all of you today, the graduates of the class of 2009, and to formally welcome you to the UMass Dartmouth Alumni Association.

Some twenty-two years ago -- wow seems like yesterday -- I stood before a similar audience in this very same amphitheater and proudly walked across this stage to receive my degree and right of passage. Ambitious, eager, and ready to work hard, I was off to begin my career. My degree from UMass Dartmouth has been the golden key which unlocked many rewarding and exciting opportunities.

Your accomplishments, being recognized today, are testament to your dedication and hard which have been your guiding principals throughout your collegiate experience.

There are many doors of opportunities that await each and every one of you. Throughout your continued journey, remember that success is an amazing journey and not a destination. Your individual ideals of success will be rewarding if you set no boundaries and dare to dream big. Know that success without the journey is a canvas with some paint compared to a canvas with a picture that tells a unique story.

You have already begun the unique picture on your own canvas. As your new journey begins today, embrace the joys, cherish every memory, learn from the set-backs and challenges, and keep yourself open to all the new possibilities as the roads untraveled are many.

There is no mystery that our country is in a transitional and uncertain period, and as such there are many challenges it represents. But remember, times like these also represent hope and the promise of something new and better, Hope is eternal!!

Times of change create a platform to do better and sometimes make the changes that are necessary. Embrace change as without it greatness can not happen.

In the world that awaits you, beyond the boundaries of UMass D, you are all taking with you a **world class education from a world class University.**

As you take your drive home today, I urge you to make some commitments to yourself and to the place which has been home to you for the past four years.

I encourage you to cherish and nurture the friendships and connections that you have made over the past few years. While you live out your life vocations always make the time for the people in your life. Stay true, committed, and dedicated to the things that are important to you. Dare to take chances because the world of the unknown can be a magnificent place. Believe in the impossible and believe that you can make a difference.

The Alumni Association hopes that you stay connected and involved with the UMass Dartmouth Community by attending reunions and alumni events. You have witnessed the amazing and on-going development and expansion of our collective campuses that make UMass Dartmouth the prestigious university it is today. That is, in part, possible because of the collective excellence and achievement of all who have left their footprint on this campus.

Take pride in your success and where you come from. Unlike the risky investments in the stock market these days, you have all made the best investments in your future by attending this university. The value of

your degree you are receiving today will indeed grow. The Alumni Association and the university are committed to maintaining a life-long relationship with each and every one of you, as well as future alumni who too will strive for educational excellence.

Class of 2009, on behalf of the Umass Dartmouth Alumni Association Board of Directors, I offer you the most sincerest and heartfelt congratulations!