

University of Louisville
MAY 2012 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
2PM

DR. RAMSEY:

Thank you, Dr. Staat.

Dr. Bob Staat has been a professor of microbiology in our School of Dentistry since 1976. He is chair of our Faculty Senate and the faculty trustee.

Dr. Staat has done much for UofL. Join me in thanking him for his extraordinary service and commitment to UofL.

In 2006 Phil Laemmle retired from his faculty position in the Department of Political Science at the University of Louisville after 34 years of service. But we know, a UofL commencement would not be a UofL commencement without Phil Laemmle as our university ritualist and grand marshal. Would you please join me in thanking Phil for his 40 years of service to UofL.

As President of the University of Louisville, it is my privilege to welcome you – the Class of 2012 to our Spring Commencement Ceremony.

Welcome and congratulations!

We also welcome your families and your friends to this special occasion – this our fourth commencement at the KFC Yum! Center.

We are honored that a number of community leaders and several members of the University's Board of Trustees, Board of Overseers, and the Alumni Association have joined us today for this special occasion.

We ask you to stand so we can recognize these individuals.

Trustees, Overseers, and Alumni board members stand to be recognized.

At the University of Louisville we say “it is happening here.” A passion for educational excellence, creating new knowledge and scholarship, and providing valuable service to our community and state – it IS all happening here.

It is happening here because we have -

The courage to question convention.

The passion to break new ground.

The insight to champion community.

The imagination to pursue the undiscovered.

The will to achieve greatness.

The promise of a limitless future.

And most importantly, IT is happening here because we have the people to bring it to life.

During your years at UofL we as an institution has faced interesting challenges - a flood, an ice storm, a wind and the recent hail storm.

Weather challenges are just that, challenges. We can repair, fix up, and restore the campus to its previous condition.

But what we can never recover from are the state budget cuts that we’ve been subjected to over the last 12 years.

We understand the economic downturn of 2008, but now at the very time when the economy is starting to grow and improve, we are incurring another state budget cut - \$9 million.

This is the very time we should be investing more in higher education and more in health care – we should be building a new classroom building on our Belknap Campus. We should be adding faculty – when in fact, cuts are keeping us from filling vacant faculty positions.

And there are also those today who want to cut funding for indigent care in our community, potentially hurting not only needy citizens in our community but placing a greater burden on University Hospital and our medical school.

Yet we as a campus community have not flinched. We have moved forward as an academic community. We continue to make it happen!

Since the enactment of the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997, we have lead Kentucky's public universities in the achievement of the reform's goals -

- We are ranked 1st in the percentage increase in the 6-year graduation rate,
- We are ranked 1st in the increase in the number of doctoral degrees awarded, 3
- We are ranked 1st in the percentage increase in doctoral STEM degrees awarded,
- Our recent graduates are scoring in the top 15% nationally on the Praxis II exam, and
- We are ranked first in the percentage increase in the average ACT score of our incoming freshmen.

We are succeeding because we do have the people to to make it happen:

- Outstanding students
- A great faculty
- A dedicated staff and
- Committed alumni and friends

To each of you - students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends – Thank you.

And so today we gather – as a community of students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends – to celebrate the most treasured tradition of the academy – commencement.

Commencement is a celebration; a celebration of accomplishment, a celebration of the achievement of an important milestone.

When you- the Class of 2012- began your college studies it was impossible to imagine the changes that would occur in our world and the challenges we would now face as a society:

- The worst economic downturn since World War II
- Civil unrest around the globe
- Information and technology advances that multiply daily.

And while our world today is different than when you began at UofL, you are ready to face this changing world; your faculty at UofL have prepared you to think, to reason, to communicate, to be creative, and to “take on” challenges and change.

When you began your studies, you made a commitment; a commitment of money, but even more, a commitment of time and a commitment of effort.

We applaud you for being true to your commitment. Congratulations graduates – this is your day!

But while commencement is a celebration it is more; it is far more – for it is a beginning.

For that reason your faculty excitedly await for you, for you, to take your place in this complex and rapidly changing world – for it is a world that needs you – a world that needs your talents and abilities, your energy, your service, your leadership and your spirit.

We, as a university community, pause on commencement day to recognize and celebrate our successes as an institution.

But commencement is also a time for a recommitment for us as an institution.

For while we are a great institution – with a long history and tradition of achievement – our work at the University of Louisville is not finished. And being the leader in Kentucky is not good enough.

So we as an institution recommit today to our statutory mandate.

In the most difficult of budget times – we must not give up on the job given to us by the people of Kentucky.

We, as a campus community, must re-commit with a renewed enthusiasm – to our love for teaching and learning and to the creation of new knowledge and scholarship so that economic opportunity and the quality of life in our community and state improves for all people.

On this wonderful day may you, the Class of 2012, commit, and may we as an institution re-commit to making our community, our state and our world a better place.

Dr. Robert Staat, chair of the faculty senate, and member of the Board of Trustees, will introduce today's faculty speaker.

HONORARY DEGREES

DR. RAMSEY:

The most prestigious way a university can honor individuals who have contributed to the enhancement and enrichment of society is by the awarding of an honorary degree.

Honorary degrees salute special achievement and recognize outstanding service. Honorary degrees are presented to celebrate the unique contributions of individuals who deserve to have formal membership in the university community.

Honorary degrees are voted upon by members of the graduate faculty of the university and are approved by the Board of Trustees.

I now call upon Blake Haselton, Dean of the College of Education and Human Development to help me recognize today's recipients.

DR. RAMSEY:

UofL has outstanding faculty and outstanding academic leadership.

The captain of this great team is our Provost and Executive Vice President, Dr. Shirley Willihnganz.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Willihnganz for her leadership.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

DR. RAMSEY:

Soon to be graduates, I introduce to you the President of our Alumni Association, Wally Oyler.

DR. RAMSEY:

To you graduates, Class of 2012, today is possible because of sacrifices you have made. Today is also made possible due to the sacrifices of others.

Your mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, your children, relatives and friends –have believed in you and supported you.

Without their help and encouragement, and the courage and persistence they instilled in you, it would have been more difficult, maybe impossible, for you to reach this important milestone. They have watched you set high goals and attain them, and they are proud to be sharing this special moment with you today. I know – 6 months ago at this ceremony I was a proud parent of a graduate.

I ask you, our graduates, to stand to applaud and thank your families and friends for helping make this day possible.

Members of the graduating class of Spring 2012 please remain standing.

Your University is proud of you - we celebrate your achievement.

In the years ahead you will attain many professional and personal successes, and you will discover your own unique way to serve our society, and to “make it happen”.

And now, the single most exciting moment for me as President - on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Louisville, I am pleased to grant each one of you the degrees and certificates you have earned, based on the recommendations of the faculties of the colleges and schools in the University.

Congratulations, Graduates!

ALMA MATER

We thy sons and daughters stand
To sing thy highest praise
With deepest rev'rence in our hearts
For these our college days
Thy honor true, we all defend
'tis known we love thee well
Our thoughts for years to come will be
Of thee, our U of L
Now our thoughts go back to you
Our alma mater dear
To days gone by with friends we loved
Now scattered far and near
On shaded walks and campus green
Your sons and daughters true
With voices raised and spirits high,
Sing loud their praise to you.