

June 7, 2017
Convocation Hall
University of Toronto

**Mayor Bonnie Crombie's Keynote Address to University of Toronto Mississauga
Graduating Class 2017**

The following address was delivered by Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie during the convocation ceremony for the University of Toronto Mississauga's graduating class of 2017:

"Good evening, everyone. I am honoured and humbled to celebrate the achievements of the 2017 graduating class of the University of Toronto Mississauga.

"Let me recognize Chancellor Michael Wilson and Interim Vice-President and Principal Ulli Krull.

"To the students: congratulations, you have earned this day.

"Take pride in knowing that you now join the league of extraordinary men and women who have graduated from this world-class institution of academic excellence.

"The class of 2017 is all the more memorable, as we mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the University of Toronto Mississauga.

"As the mother of three children and two currently in university, let me extend my appreciation to the parents, and all those relatives and friends who have helped you throughout your years at U of T.

"You have walked side-by-side with these bright minds on what has surely been both a challenging and enriching journey.

"Although, there is only room for one name on the degree, take heart in knowing that their success is your success.

"Along the way our graduating class have encountered professors who inspired them to go above and beyond their studies; question existing theories; push the boundaries of research; and reach higher.

"In doing so, many of you have reaffirmed or discovered your vocation.

"And if you haven't found your calling just yet, fortunately, the pursuit of knowledge is never settled.

"Never stop learning.

"Never lose touch with your professors.

"Wherever life's journey may lead you, they are always there to mentor and guide you.

"You chose the University of Toronto, following in the footsteps of men and women who would go on to become Nobel laureates; heads of state and government; Supreme Court judges; winning Olympians; inspiring theologians and reputable journalists; giants of industry, science, literature and the arts.

“Alumni have unearthed ancient ruins and unlocked history; others have defied gravity and reached for the stars.

“There have even been a few mayors.

“But your time at the University of Toronto Mississauga was not about preparing you to follow in the footsteps of others.

“Your time here has prepared you to be courageous, be fearless and to lead.

“As I look out at Convocation Hall, I am comforted, encouraged and proud in knowing that your education has varied from the environmental science to political science; from commerce and finance; to art and art history; from applied statistics to French studies.

“And whether it’s the school community, or the broader community, this diversity of backgrounds, knowledge and ideas, enriches us all.

“I know a thing or two about building strong communities.

“I’m in the city-building business.

“Each day I meet with new Canadians and those whose Canadian lineages pre-date Confederation.

“I meet people of all ages; men and women of different cultures and faiths.

“In one day, I can find myself bringing greetings in five different languages.

“And I can say with complete confidence that embracing diversity is the hallmark of a compassionate, confident and thriving community.

“The kind of place some can only dream of calling home.

“In a few short weeks we officially mark the 150th anniversary of our nation’s founding.

“Mississauga embodies the very best of Canada – a place where all people, no matter faith or ethnicity are safe, have dignity, and can confidently participate in civic life; where residents are welcomed, invited and encouraged to share and celebrate their culture for everyone to experience, appreciate and enjoy.

“As we reflect on this historic sesquicentennial, let us remember the wisdom of U of T alumnus, Lester B. Pearson.

“Prime Minister Pearson asked of his fellow citizens: *“How can there be peace without people understanding each other; and how can this be if they don’t know each other?”*

“We find ourselves in a time of global uncertainty.

“There are some who want to build walls and breakup families; those who wish to threaten the safe refuge and sanctuary of open, tolerant, communities.

“All of us here – and especially the graduates – must respond to the words of Lester Pearson as a call to action.

“As new graduates, armed with an invaluable education, knowledge and a wealth of experience from your time as students at the University of Toronto Mississauga, I again urge you to be fearless, be relentless in defence of your community, its values and its people.

“Have ferocious courage to act and overcome intolerance.

“Dr. Martin Luther King said people are not inherently bad they are blind.

“Help people see that it’s not what’s on your head, but what’s in your head and in your heart, that matters.

“Scripture reminds us to *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

“As you prepare to go forth into the broader community, be that righteous and just neighbour wherever you are, to whomever you meet.

“Do your part.

“Strengthen the social fabric that binds a community together.

“Before I close my remarks, let me share with you seven pieces of advice that have taken me from the lecture halls of U of T to the boardrooms of global companies like McDonalds and Disney; to the launch of my own business; to a seat in the House of Commons and now as mayor of Canada’s sixth largest city.

“I hope you’re taking notes!

“First, pursue lifelong learning.

“If you thought undergrad was rewarding, set your sights on graduate school.

“It only gets better.

“Second, take calculated risks and be bold.

“As business giant Mellody Hobson has said *“the biggest risk of all is not taking one.”*

“Third, build a network.

“I mentioned the need to stay in touch with professors.

“The same goes for your classmates and all alumni.

“As life takes you places keep one foot firmly planted on campus and remain involved at UTM.

“Today doesn’t have to be goodbye.

“Fourth, work hard, under promise and over deliver.

“With all the success you will surely enjoy, remember to be humble in all you accomplish.

“Fifth, don’t leave it to fate.

“As my mother would say, *“If it is to be, it is up to me.”*”

“I wasn’t just handed the keys to city hall.

“It’s called running for office for a reason!

“Sixth, have a mentor.

“In life you will come across people who genuinely want to help you succeed.

“Listen to them.

“Never let them go.

“And remember to return the favour in your career.

“Volunteer as alumni mentors.

“Seventh, be authentic, be true to yourself, follow your passion; make plans and achieve and exceed your goals.

“You are the one and only ever you.

“Don’t deprive the world of your talents, ambition and contributions.

“As I bring my remarks to a close, let me thank the faculty, students and staff from the University of Toronto Mississauga for inviting me to be with you.

“Congratulations once again to the class of 2017.

“Enjoy today.

“Look with confidence to what tomorrow brings.

“We all eagerly look forward to supporting and watching as your promising lives and careers unfold.”