



## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

John A. Zinn, III

Good morning President Ayers, Dr. Allred, Dean Narduzzi, Dean Swartz, colleagues, honored guests, family, friends and soon to be graduates.

It is with great honor that I stand before you today as the recipient of the 2010 Itzkowitz Family Distinguished Faculty Award. In fact, there is no higher recognition than to be selected by those I serve, my students.

For those of you who have not joined me in class, I am the one who tortures students with economics. Several among you encouraged me to talk today about externalities, public goods, and the fact that unemployment is a lagging indicator.

However, today is your day. You have worked hard. You have sacrificed. You have given up the next best alternative to pursue your education. In economics, we call this opportunity cost.

As you plan the next phase of your journey, pause to consider where you have been and how you have arrived at this point. In the words of Walt Disney, "Many hands, hearts, and minds generally contribute to anyone's notable achievements." As you celebrate your success today, be certain to thank those who have supported you along the way. Family. Friends. Colleagues. Classmates. Teachers. Many people have contributed to your education. Economists call this human capital.

Going forward, it is now time to consider how you will best use your education. My suggestion is that you continue it. Today the buzz-word is 'life-long learners'. In fact, the term is so over-used, some now are discouraging its use all together. Either way, make certain you continue to grow and continue to learn.

I have been blessed with the opportunity to teach students of all ages. In fact, I have even spent some time teaching economics to kindergartners. This, more than anything else, helped prepare me for teaching at the university level. The point is, approach life as they do. Never stop exploring, questioning, reading, creating, learning, or playing.

Here is your last homework assignment, at least for now. When my step-mother was in college *many* years ago, one of her professors suggested this as they walked from class one spring morning. And so I suggest this to you today. When you leave this

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ceremony, take a look at the trees and be amazed with all of the different shades of green. Chances are, you have never given it a thought.

In closing, I would like to thank all of you, both students and faculty, for allowing me to be part of your journey. Together, we are successful.