>> Steve Lerman, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs: Please rise and join me in welcoming the graduating class of the George Washington University.

>> Steve Lerman: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the faculty of the George Washington University.
(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to George Washington University board of trustees, the Chair Nelson A. Carbonell, Jr., President Steven Knapp, members of the administration and our very special awardees and honorees escorted by the GW Police Department Honor Guard.
(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: On behalf of my colleagues on stage and all of my colleagues who make up this great university community, I am delighted to welcome all of you to the spring commencement in this the 193rd year of the George Washington University. All who are able, please stand. We will begin our ceremony with the Presentation of the Colors by the George Washington Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Ceremonial Color Guard, and the National Anthem sung by Millicent Scarlett.

(Music.)

>> Millicent Scarlett, lecturer in music: Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hailed, at the twilight's last gleaming. Whose broad stripe and bright stars, through the perilous fight o'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming. And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. Oh, say does that star spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
(APPLAUSE)

>> Sidi Nooruddin, coordinator, Islamic Ministry Services, Washington, D.C.: Good morning, please join me in prayer. In the name of the Divine, great and constant in mercy. O Lord of many names and attributes, who transcends gender and race, who exists within and without in states of being and non-being abounding in grace. We extol thanks and praise for the bounties of being a part of a campus of diverse communities that offers each student unique opportunities. We express our thanks of four years of scholarly instruction with the hope of realizing our potential for individual and communal transformation. We seek refuge in you alone from the difficulties we may face in graduate school applications, and job interviews. We seek refuge in you alone oh, God, to ask you to grant us your love and the love of those actions which lead us to you. Oh, Lord, forgive our shortcomings and make our actions pure and keeping them from harming others. Grant us tolerance and acceptance of others, that the doors of ignorance are closed. Oh, Lord, give us that certainty by which doubts are dispelled and the courage to seek the truth within ourselves. Grant us the discernment that brings us out of confusion but instill upon us a light to guide us out and bring understanding between people. Oh, Lord, we ask you for the grace to have hearts which are tranquil and steadfast, prayerful
and gracious, which recognize the truth and adhere to it. Oh, Lord, dispel poverty from us and let us not be unmindful of the suffering of others. Bestow on us a light in our eyes, certainty in our hearts, love in our souls with the delight of your remembrance. Oh, Lord at times of ease and times of need, make us thankful for our bounties, patient in your calamities and content with our destinies, Ameen. Congratulations.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Please be seated.

Class of 2014, I am delighted to open this ceremony in this truly one-of-a-kind setting in the Nation's Mall to gather so close to the U.S. Capitol and monument dedicated to the nation's first president is a fitting tribute to your achievement in completing your degrees. It's now my honor and privilege to invite the president of the university to join me at the podium. Dr. Steven Knapp is concluding his 7th year as president of the George Washington University. Dr. Knapp leads a community of faculty, students and staff that numbers almost 30,000 people. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the George Washington University's 16th president, Dr. Steven Knapp.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp, president of the George Washington University: Thank you Provost Chair Carbonell, university trustees, honorary degree recipients, university leaders, distinguished faculty, ladies and gentlemen, good morning! Graduates: Let me begin by congratulating you on your outstanding achievements and tell you that the George Washington University is very, very proud of you. Very proud of you!

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: I would like to thank our host, the National Park Service and the park service staff for their gracious and generous help preparing this majestic setting for today's ceremony. Please join me in thanking the National Park Service and staff.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Now, I would like to continue important commencement tradition with the parents, the families and the friends of the Class of 2014, please rise to accept our congratulations and our thanks.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: It is now my pleasure to recognize the special guests who today will receive the university's highest honor. Please join me in welcoming social justice advocate and former president and CEO of the Greater Washington Urban League, Maudine Cooper.

(APPLAUSE)


(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: And world-renowned chef, culinary innovator and passionate champion of education, health and economic opportunity, Jose Andres.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: I now have the honor of introducing Nelson A. Carbonell Jr., chair of the university's Board of Trustees. Mr. Carbonell.
>> Nelson Carbonell, chair of the George Washington University Board of Trustees: Thank you President Knapp. So I don't know if anyone knows this, in my first year as board chair my job was to control the weather for this event.

(LAUGHTER)

>> Nelson Carbonell: I think I have done fairly well.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Nelson Carbonell: Thank you. Good morning. I am honored as chair of the Board of Trustees to join President Knapp and my fellow trustees in welcoming all of you on this very significant occasion, as we celebrate the Class of 2014 and their many achievements and accomplishments. I would first like to ask the trustees who have joined us this morning to please rise and be recognized.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Nelson Carbonell: To my colleagues, my deepest thanks for your leadership and service to the Board of Trustees. We are grateful for your commitment to the George Washington University. It is also my pleasure to offer a special welcome to our honorary degree recipients, my new friend, Maudine Cooper, who I met for the first time last night.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Nelson Carbonell: My old friend and predecessor as board chair, W. Russell Ramsey.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Nelson Carbonell: And my dear friend, Jose Andres. Bienvenido, Jose. We appreciate all of you being here on this momentous occasion to not only celebrate our graduates but to recognize the hard work and commitment of the faculty, the support of the staff, and the love and caring of the family and friends that helped them through their journey at GW. It was almost 33 years ago that I came to the George Washington University on a scholarship. I don't exaggerate when I say it was the opportunity of a lifetime. Twenty-nine years ago, I graduated with a bachelor's degree in engineering. From my own experience --

(APPLAUSE)


(LAUGHTER)

>> Nelson Carbonell: From my own experience I can tell you that the time I spent here the education that I received and the friends that I made have stayed with me and continued to enrich my life. GW gave me an opportunity, challenged me intellectually and prepared me well for the future. I will be forever grateful and loyal to this university. As a board member and as the new chair, I along with my fellow trustees have an opportunity to play a leading role in the growth and development of this university. Today we stand among the most respected and admired universities in the world.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Nelson Carbonell: Now, each of you, our new GW graduates, has a role to play. Take all you have learned through your academic and co-curricular pursuits and the pride and respect that you have gained for your alma mater into the world as citizen leaders. Each of you has been
shaped by your experience at the George Washington University. I encourage you to fully utilize your individual talents to make a difference in our world. Finally, don't wait to be asked: Stay connected with this university by visiting campus, letting us know of your accomplishments, sharing your expertise, hiring a fellow GW alum, making gifts to support the institution and encouraging others to follow in your footsteps here at the George Washington University. We are proud of you, and I know you will always be as proud as I am to say: I am a graduate of the George Washington University. Congratulations to all of you.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Nelson Carbonell: It is now my pleasure to turn the program back over to Provost Lerman.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: It's now my honor to recognize this year's recipients of the George Washington awards. These awards are conferred for extraordinary contributions to the George Washington community. The students and faculty who receive the award have each in his or her own way shaped our university, making it the outstanding institution that it is today. It gives me great pleasure to announce this year's honorees. As I call your name, please rise. Samantha Marguiles, a 2016 candidate for a Doctor of Medicine degree in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Edward McCord, associate professor of history and international affairs.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: And Jane Wallis, a candidate for a Bachelor's of Science degree in the Milken Institute School of Public Health.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Thanks to all of you. Now, please join me once again in congratulating the winners of these awards.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Let me now introduce Steven Frenkil, president of the GW Alumni Association who will offer a few remarks and introduce our student speaker for the day.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Frenkil: Good morning everyone. I am a proud graduate of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Frenkil, president of the George Washington Alumni Association: And honored to be the president of your George Washington Alumni Association. Here today are the members of the board of the Alumni Association and we congratulate you on behalf of the entire GW community representing over 250,000 alumni in over 150 countries! It's a great privilege to honor and welcome our alumni emeriti in the audience today, sitting in the front of the stage in gold robes and commemorative hats, rise and have you recognize them as they stand.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Frenkil: Thank you. As graduates, you face the challenge of balancing the need to push forward in the pursuit of success against the need to experience life in the present moment. When my class was graduating back in the '70s from GW, a line from the Rolling Stones song Ruby Tuesday captured this issue. The line was: Cash your dreams before they
slip away. Today this issue has been translated by two recent popular songs into the word YOLO, and "You only live once." One song uses the word YOLO for enjoying life, even when it involves potentially risky behavior. The other released in a skit last year on Saturday Night Live provides a caricature of the opposite behavior, an overly protective outlook, where everything is too dangerous, where you should as they say, "Take no chances," "board your windows up," and "just hide." GW grads understand that we need to live our lives somewhere between those two extremes. As you continue to explore how you want to live your life, pursue your goals and achieve your dreams, having resources and advice to help you get is there can be very important. Many graduates from time to time may want help looking for a job or getting career advice. Getting mentoring to help you or getting established inside your next new city. I want you to know that a central theme of the GW Alumni is promoting a culture of Colonials Helping Colonials. Colonials Helping Colonials mean GW faculty, students and staff are committed to looking out for each other, opening doors and helping each other becoming successful. Colonials Helping Colonials is the name for our established shared expectation that when a colonial reaches out to you you will help. It's a very practical thing to do. It means we take each other's calls, answer e-mails and text messages and open doors for each other. Yes, you only live once. And Colonials Helping Colonials is imbedded in our culture the message that you are part of a GW family to help you accomplish your goals and realize your dreams. There are concrete actions that you can take to advance your interests and stay connected to GW. There are concrete actions you can take to advance your interests and stay connected to GW. You can join the Young Alumni Network and participate in the alumni networking events. You can download the GW app. Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter and the alumni GW Alumni LinkedIn group, which is very large, mentor students, give advice or get advice on the online Career Advisory Network, attend class reunions and visit the campus and especially Alumni House. No matter where you live, work or play, you are always Colonials and always members of your GW Alumni Association that is here to help you. And now, it's my great privilege to introduce our student speaker, Gabriel Felder.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Frenkil: Gabe was the winner of the Student Commencement Speaker Competition, which this year had more than 60 impressive entries. Gabe graduates today with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Communications from the School of Media and Public Affairs. Born in Stamford, Connecticut, he spent a year studying in Jerusalem and then arrived here at GW. He quickly became involved in Jewish student life and became president of the Jewish Student Association. For his documentary production class, he examined and co-created a film about the snakehead fish. The documentary entitled appropriately "Invasive" was featured in this year's Environmental Film Festival here in Washington. Following graduation, Gabe will pursue his passion for education, and community building as a member of Teach for America in New York. So please join me in welcoming Gabriel Felder.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Gabriel Felder, 2014 Commencement student speaker, B.A. ‘14: Thank you, Mr. Frenkil. Three years, one month and three days ago, I had a conversation with my father. We had just gotten back from colonial inauguration and he was rewarding himself for surviving three days of the D. C. summer heat with a pint of Haagen-Dazs. I was talking about how excited I was to be beginning this part of my life, reveling in all GW had to offer. I was lost in my own thoughts about what classes I was thinking about taking, what student orgs I wanted to be involved in, so on and so forth. My father looked up from his ice cream and asked, "So you are excited to go?" I said, "Of course," annoyed he was asking such an obvious question. To which he said, "Good, just don't waste it." I took the advice to heart but what I realize now is I didn't really need it. To
be a GW student is antithetical to wasting it. We are perhaps best known as those that don't just seize opportunities but make our own. We are the students who internalized best at our time at the university the words of the late Rabbi Menachem Mendl Shneerson, the Lubavitcher rebebe "In each journey of your life you must fully be where you are. You may be only passing through on your way somewhere else seemingly more important, nevertheless, there is purpose in where you are right now." We are the students that after an internship on The Hill and a federal work-study job at HelWel, spend hours in Gelman researching a paper or studying for a midterm. We are industrious. We are GW Colonials.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Gabriel Felder: We are not just college students. We do not sit idly by and reminisce about better days behind us. We don't mope and wait for the world to deliver better things. We know never to take the present for granted. That life does not begin till we say it does. My father never got to see his son follow that advice. He passed away a little over a month after that humid June night. But I can look today at this crowd and see proud parents, beaming at the sight of their children in their caps and gowns. And I can wholeheartedly say that none of us have wasted the amazing opportunity that it was to be given and education at the George Washington University.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Gabriel Felder: And I had can look at my mother and my sister's faces and I can say wholeheartedly to my father, you should have known I would make the most of my four years, I am a Colonial after all, it's in my blood.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Gabriel Felder: Now, I want you to think back to that first day and think of every morning you greeted this campus sleepy with a cup of Gelman Starbucks in your hand, and be grateful for every professor who taught you to stand up and be heard. To every mentor that pushed you to lead and not follow, to every advisor you have had for his or her endless help in ensuring your education was the best it could be. More than anything be grateful to your parents who selflessly supported you your entire life. Be proud of the men and women you have become because you will change the world for the better. This moment is ours but it's not our only one, just one of many. And I cannot wait to watch us seize them all. Congratulations, L'chaim, mazal tov, from the Class of 2014. Now, guys, let's get a class picture.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Thank you very much Gabe. Your remarks and achievements, of course, inspire all of us. Now is the time in the program in President Knapp will confer the honorary degrees.

>> Steven Knapp: The recipient of our first honorary degree this morning will be introduced by Asianna Joyce. Asianna is a first-generation college student who graduates today with a bachelor's degree in psychology and minor in journalism and mass communication. She is currently an intern at Black Entertainment Television network and has just concluded an internship with Fox 5 News. She has also established her own WRGW talk show and has founded a service-based television and a mentoring organization for youth called Positivity Mentoring. In September, Asianna was awarded the GW Black Alumni Association Emerging IMPACT Award which recognizes current students who are making an impact on GW's campus and the local community.

(APPLAUSE)
>> Asianna Joyce, B.A. ‘14: President Knapp, I am honored to present to you Maudine Cooper for the degree of doctor of public service honoris causa. (APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: You have dedicated your career to helping people advance in employment, education and business ownership in the Washington, DC area. As an attorney, public official and nonprofit leader, you have worked tirelessly to enhance life for Washingtonians. You were educated at Howard University earning a bachelor’s degree in business administration in 1964 and a Juris Doctor in 1971. You began your career as a tax attorney and college instructor before joining the Washington bureau of the National Urban League in 1973. There, you rose to the rank of vice-president and directed the league’s legislative office in the District of Columbia. You joined the District of Columbia government in 1983 and served your city as director of the Office of Human Rights and of the Office of Minority Business Opportunity. In these roles, you helped ensure equal opportunity employment and housing for district residents. Later, you served as chief of staff to Mayor Marion Barry before returning to the National Urban League in 1990, this time as president and chief executive officer of the Greater Washington Urban League. Your leadership was essential to the provision of critical education, employment training, and housing and health services to more than 65,000 of your community members annually. As a civic leader, your achievements and awards are inspiring. You serve on boards and commissions with MassMutual Financial Group, the Washington area U.S. Savings Bond Campaign and the Mayor's Health Services Reform Commission. You are president of the Capitol Area Council of Urban League presidents and member of the District of Columbia Bar Association, the D.C. Chamber of Commerce and Delta Sigma Theta sorority. You have received the Isaiah Award for the Pursuit of Justice, presented by the Washington Chapter of the American Jewish Committee, were named one of McDonald’s Black History Makers of Today in the Washington, DC area, were honored with the Vanguard Award in civic engagement from the National Urban League. The Urban League has named an award for young professionals in your honor. Maudine Cooper, in recognition of all of the foregoing, the George Washington University proudly confers upon you the degree of Doctor of Public Service honoris causa. (APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: With all the rights, duties and privileges pertaining thereto. Congratulations. (APPLAUSE)

>> Maudine Cooper, honorary degree recipient: Is it still morning? (LAUGHTER)

>> Maudine Cooper: Good morning students of the Class of 2014, parents, guardians, friends. Parents and guardians you don’t have to run from the phone anymore because they don’t need any more money. (LAUGHTER)

>> Maudine Cooper: So they let you know, children are forever, even when they are 30 and 40. But this is an honor that I cannot give enough words enough, language to tell you how proud I am. You know I am recently retired, and for those of you who are over 50, I moved into assistive living facility, that tells you I am really old. With this university's honor I acknowledge that we had tremendous partnership over the years, it has been extraordinary. We have had students working at The Urban League doing real work. I tell people we are not having them answering the phone and copying papers, they worked. They
have some of the students writing proposals, that's not -- that's not just work, it's serious. We are a social services organization. I retired in December. The local is 75 years old. I was proud to be the president for over 25 years. Our past president Stephen Joel Trachtenberg was on your board of directors and your current president Steven Knapp is on the board. The league's current board Chair Michael Akin, president of Reingold Link, is a graduate of the university. Many of your alumni and students have worked with us over the years as interns and they have come back to volunteer. We are so pleased. So we have a long, impressive history, I am also thanking them for making this possible. For this nomination and all of the support he provided all of these years we know each other as friends, as colleagues and as folks that bail each other out of a little bit of trouble. All of my life I wanted to help people in a small way as time went by through the city and through The Urban League I found a means of helping in a larger way. You heard the numbers that were read about the services that we provide. They have not changed. We have a new president, but as you know here at the university, you change leadership, but time goes on. For those who are dreading Monday, job search day, find a job, want a job, can't find a job, it's going to be all right. Trust me. I am from the generation where you did what you could even what minimum wage of 5 to $6. You will be all right. Minimum wage isn't bad, it's money. (LAUGHTER)

>> Maudine Cooper: When you call your parents and tell them what kind of job you got you going to hear screams they are so happy you are working contributing to all that they have done all of these years. To all of you, I want you to leave you with these words from Laura Harvey, editor of the Daily Word. "Go be who you are, openly and authentically. Allow people to see you at your best, your worst, and everything in between. You may never know who you are inspiring and encourage just by being yourself." And I have to tell you I fired a young lady once and I ran into her at a function, so I figure she was going to come punch me in my mouth. She thanked me for firing her. I said, "Why are you thanking me?" "Because you fired me, I had to go to school. I got a scholarship, I went to school and graduated and now I have a good job." I said, "You do?" It was a better job than she had at the League, but at any rate she thanked me. Don't be afraid to do the right thing when it's necessary and sometimes when it's not. Again, I thank you for this honor. God bless you on your journey. I am going to end with this note: You heard folks tell you what you are going to do next week, next year, five years from now. Next week, don't call your parents, write a check. Don't buy that big bottle of whatever, write a check. Whether it's $5, 5,000 or $5 million, whatever the amount is, your university needs you. You say they met my needs, now it's your turn to meet their needs. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Our second honorary degree recipient will be introduced by Kelly Danver. (APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Kelly graduates today with a bachelor's degree in history. She is currently an intern at the university's Office off Alumni Relations working as part of the GW Alumni Magazine staff. During her time here, she participated in the GW College Democrats, WRGW, and the co- ed honors fraternity Phi Sigma Pi.

>> Kelly Danver, B.A. ‘14: President Knapp, I am honored to present to you W. Russell Ramsey for the degree of Doctor of Public Services, honoris causa.

>> Steven Knapp: You are a native Washingtonian and have spent most of your life contributing to the progress of your hometown as entrepreneur, businessman, education leader and
philanthropist. You enrolled at the George Washington University in 1977 the recipient of a baseball scholarship. Four years later you graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Since your graduation you have been inducted into the GW Athletic Hall of Fame and honored as a member of the baseball program's All-Century Team. In 1989, you and two business partners mortgaged your houses and founded Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group in a small office on Pennsylvania Avenue not far from the White House. You shared one phone line. Within a few years, you emerged as one of the preeminent investment banks in the country, ultimately providing billions of dollars in capital for companies in a wide range of industries and employing more than 2,000 people. In 2001, you retired from Friedman, Billings Ramsey Group and founded Ramsey Asset Management, where you currently serve as chairman, chief executive officer, and chief investment officer. Throughout your career you have been an active investor in many start-up and young companies, providing capital, guidance and expertise critical to their growth. Your generosity has benefitted not only fledging companies, but also the greater Washington, DC community. You and your wife Norma are dedicated to the improving the education and well-being of at risk families through the W. Russell and Norma G. Ramsey Foundation. You are also founding investors in Venture Philanthropy Partners, which has contributed nearly $80 million to nonprofit organizations in the DC area over the last 13 years. In 2005, you established the Ramsey Student Investment Fund at the George Washington University, offering graduate business students the opportunity to gain invaluable real-world experience in portfolio management. Your legacy at George Washington reaches far beyond your years as a student, athlete and philanthropist. In 1998, you began a distinguished tenure on the university's Board of Trustees. As chair of the board from 2007 to 2013, your achievements were vital to the growth and development of the university. You played a critical role in helping the university's endowment surpass the $1 billion threshold and also directed the special search committee for the university's 16th president. Under your leadership, the university developed a far-reaching strategic plan, restructured its medical center and redeveloped campus to include new world-class academic residential faculties, such as the forthcoming Science and Engineering Hall and George Washington Museum and the Milken Institute School of Public Health building. In recognition of the foregoing, the George Washington University proudly confers upon you the degree of Doctor of Public Service, honoris causa, with all of the rights, duties and privileges pertaining thereto. Congratulations.

(APPLAUSE)

>> W. Russell Ramsey, honorary degree recipient: Right on cue my speech went up in the winds. Thank you, Mr. President. What an amazing day to celebrate in the Nation's Capitol this amazing university. And I have to say, for me -- you have to give me a moment here, I will get the papers back together.

(APPLAUSE)

>> W. Russell Ramsey: There is a reason I am not in the big leagues.

(APPLAUSE)

>> W. Russell Ramsey: President Knapp, Chairman Carbonell, members of the board of trustees and this great students, alumnus supporters of GW and most importantly, my family, my wife Norma, Bailey, Eric, Mark and Paige, my phenomenal brother, and family and friends, I thank you so much for this honor. I don't believe I will ever be able to fully convey what this means to me. And I will say that even though I didn't plan for the wind to take away my speech,
that it did give me a moment to get this lump out of my throat, because this means as much to me as anything I can imagine. I was the first in my family to ever attend college. The first person.

(APPLAUSE)

>> And the older I get the more I appreciate just how incredible this opportunity was. And of course, it was even more pivotal because the school that gave me an opportunity to earn a degree was the George Washington University.

(APPLAUSE)

>> So, here I am. A doctor.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

>> W. Russell Ramsey: I imagine there are a few Ramseys in heaven led by my mom and dad who are really beaming with pride. I know there are a few other people in Ramseys up there who can't believe it's true.

(LAUGHTER)

>> W. Russell Ramsey: I never thought about being a doctor. I played baseball. I would have been happy tending bar at the 21st Amendment, but life takes you to places that you don't anticipate. It hands you challenges that you don't anticipate. And every time you are handed an opportunity you get a responsibility that you did not also fully anticipate. I came to GW as a student, came to the baseball diamond as an athlete, and the chairmanship of the board as an alumnus. They were such different environments, such different demands, such different teams. But, always, I kept three fundamentals in mind, I call them my three P's: Passion, purpose, and possibility. Nothing great is ever accomplished without passion. You have to feel it in your heart. Nothing great is ever accomplished without a strong sense of purpose, a clear vision. And nothing great is ever accomplished without people who have the audacity to say: Why not? Why not aim higher? Why not do better? Why shouldn't we, GW, aim to be the very best in the world.

(APPLAUSE)

>> W. Russell Ramsey: I have had my share of good breaks in my life. One of the best breaks I ever had was to work alongside people who believe in those principles just as deeply as I do. Together we have tried to build a university that is not only stronger and larger than before, but one that is more vital and focused and optimistic. We have tried to build a team that feels that in its bones. Sometimes I think about the great Lou Gehrig and his speech about being, quote, "the luckiest man on the face of the planet." Now, if you watch just that brief clip, you might think he was talking about his baseball records or all of the fans who were cheering him. But his message was just the opposite. He said he was the luckiest man in the world because he was part of an amazing team. Then one by one he singled out his teammates and talked about why they were great. He said, quote, "How many of you wouldn't feel privileged to be a part of this great team even for just one day." Even for just one day, that is how deeply he felt about it. That's the way I feel about GW, so very, very lucky and very privileged. Who wouldn't want to be a part of a team like this even for just one day. I have no idea how much of a difference I have made to GW over the last 15 years. That's not for me to say, but I am certain of one thing, I have benefitted in ways that can never be measured from generosity and vision of those who came before me. And I have been inspired by the brilliance of those who have worked alongside of me. I see so many of them here on the stage today, and in this audience, and I have been inspired by their drive. What an amazing university, what an amazing team. I am humbled to no end, and I thank you all for being here.
>> Steven Knapp: I have to say after those remarks, I also want to comment that on another windy commencement the same thing happened to my hat that just happened to the speech you saw a moment ago. But it was deftly caught in a split second by Dr. Ramsey demonstrating his Hall of Fame baseball skills. I don't know if you recall that, sir.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: I was grateful for that intervention. Thank you. Our final honorary degree recipient will be introduced by Andrew Hori.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Andrew is a December 2013 graduate of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences --

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: -- who earned a bachelor's degree in political science with a minor in philosophy. As a student, he was actively involved in the Alternative Breaks Program, Community Building Community service group, and Alpha Phi Omega fraternity. He hopes to combine his passion for food and public service to address issues of food justice and food security around the world.

>> Andrew Hori, B.A. ‘14: I want to present to you Jose Andres for the degree of Doctor of Public Service, honoris causa.

>> Steven Knapp: You grew up in Barcelona, Spain and trained under Ferran Adria, widely considered one of the most innovative chefs in the world. You moved to the United States at age 20, bringing with you not only a passion for Spanish cooking, but also a deep commitment to improving the lives of those around you. You have called Washington your home for more than two decades, co-founding the first of many notable restaurants, Jaleo, in 1993. Since then, you have won nearly every culinary award in the United States, including the James Beard Award for outstanding chef, and your cooking has delighted patrons and food critics in Washington, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Miami and Puerto Rico. Your culinary passion is more than equaled by your dedication in eradicating hunger and improving nutrition in the United States and across the world. You are emeritus chairman and devoted board member of the D.C. Central Kitchen and chair of the board of L.A. Kitchen, organizations that empower citizens through job training programs and engage communities by promoting healthy eating initiatives. After a devastating earthquake struck Haiti in 2010, you founded World Central Kitchen, a nonprofit organization that works to respond to the challenges of poverty and economic disparities around the world. You were named by then Secretary of State Hilary Clinton a culinary Ambassador for the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, through which you help to raise awareness of the negative effects caused by traditional cookstoves in developing countries. In 2010, you joined first lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" campaign in an effort to inspire individuals and families to look for innovative ways to improving the health of their communities. Your contributions have extended to the classroom. You have lectured at Harvard University and the International Culinary Center where you were named dean of the Spanish Culinary Program. Here at George Washington, you have had tremendous impact on our students and campus, transforming our understanding of food's influence on global health and economic prosperity. You are a member of the university-wide Urban Food Task Force and serve as special advisor to the president on food issues. You developed a high school
curriculum that uses examples from the world of food science, culture and history as aids in the teaching of traditional subjects at the School Without Walls, a public high school located on George Washington's Foggy Bottom campus. Your extensive list of honors includes recognition not only for your culinary innovations but also for your efforts to address food and insecurity both locally and globally. In 2010, Spain's Ministry of Culture awarded you the Order of the Arts and Letters Medallion, making you the first chef to receive that distinction. In 2012, Time Magazine named you one of the "100 Most Influential People in the World." Just this month, Refugees International bestowed on you its highest honor, the McCall-Pierpaoli Humanitarian Award. Jose Andres, in recognition of all of the foregoing, the George Washington University proudly confers upon you the degree of Doctor of Public Service, honoris causa, with all of the rights, duties and privileges pertaining thereto.  
(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Ladies and gentlemen our commencement speaker, Dr. Jose Andres.  
(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres, humanitarian, chef and 2014 GW Commencement speaker: Wow. Thank you chairman Carbonell, President Knapp, Provost Lerman and other honored guests, and everybody who makes this commencement possible. My name is Jose Andres, and I am a cook.  
(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: To the Class of 2014, congratulations! You made it!  
(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: You have worked hard to arrive at this moment. And it is a privilege to be here with you today. When President Knapp asked me to speak at your commencement, I thought, why a chef? Even my daughters said, "They asked you to speak or to cook lunch for the graduates?"  
(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: Give me a break. But they have a point. After all, I am not a famous politician, journalist or movie star. I am not one of the coolest first ladies ever.  
(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: Obviously.  
(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: And I haven't been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, yet.  
(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: But then President Knapp said I was the first person he called. Really?  
(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: Take a look.  
(APPLAUSE)  
(Video plays.)

>> Jose Andres: President Knapp, we will talk later.  
(LAUGHTER)
Jose Andres: People of George Washington University, it is an honor, and I am humbled to be here. Truth be told, this is the first university graduation that I have attended. I drop out of high school and then went on to cooking school and got my education in the kitchens of life, and today I got my degree.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Thank you. So, again, why a chef? What could a guy who cooks for a living say to a group of accomplished graduates like you? I have learned through pursuing my passion that I could an impact through the power of food. When I was a young boy in Spain every summer my parents invited friends and family to a picnic. I always wanted to help my father to cook a big paella over an open fire. But my father instead put me in charge of gathering the wood and help build that fire. But I wanted to cook! One Sunday, after years of making the fire, my simmering frustration exploded. Boom! "I want to cook, dad!" "Go away," he said, "we will talk later."

After the meal was over, my father put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Son, why are you feeling bad? Taking care of the fire is the most important thing. If you control the fire, then, and only then, you will become a cook.

I realized then that if I want to reach my dreams, first I had to lay down the foundation. The same is true of the journey you are about to take. You may want to do the cooking, but first you must learn how to build the fire.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Yes. When I was around your age I joined the Spanish Navy. My role? Cooking for the admiral at his house! What? I wanted to be at the sea. Well, after a few months of service, I went to the office of the admiral. I knocked on the door, and I told him my dream was to sail. Not on any ship, but the Juan Sebastian De Elcano, the greatest ship ever built, at least to me. The admiral granted my wish. I sailed around the world where I got my first glimpse of America. I fell in love with the idea that no matter what your background anything was possible here. I wanted to be part of the American Dream. And I -- and if I hadn't knocked on that door I wouldn't be here today. Don't be afraid of rejection. Don't be afraid to knock on that door. Don't miss the opportunity to sail into your future.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Upon finishing my Navy service, I returned to America the first chance I got. Legally in case any immigration officer --

(LAUGHTER)

Jose Andres: No one was waiting to greet me. Every dollar I had went to my taxi fare. $50 exactly. But $50 was enough to get me halfway to my new job. I watched the yellow cab drive away and there I sat on a cold January night, 100 blocks from where I needed to be, watching the steam rise from the streets of New York. Welcome to America, Jose. My story is not one of overnight success. When I found myself alone in a new country, I didn't buy a lottery ticket, I didn't hit the jackpot. I just kept going. On that cold night, I picked up my bags and started walking. All these years later my path has brought me here, as your path has led you here to this day to celebrate your accomplishments.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Come on people of George Washington, look where you are. You are at the epicenter of the American dream. But today you are doing something much more important, you are shaping the new American Dream. It's not about having high paying jobs, big houses, fast
cars. There is not wrong with that. But the new American Dream is bigger. It's about how to achieve your success while also making an impact in the world. What you create for yourselves you must also create for others. We need to know ourselves, embrace our individuality. But it's not only the "I" it's the "we."

(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: The world is yours to claim, not because of a diploma but because we have each other. Look to your left -- come on, do it. Look to your left. Now look to your right. Yes. We can never forget that we are only as good as the people we have around us. I wouldn't be starting -- I wouldn't be standing here today --

(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: I wouldn't be standing here today without those who supported me, my wife, my children.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: You are surrounded by family, friends, and George Washington community. We are all here to lift you up, cheering your achievements and embracing your failures. But as you embark on your journey ahead, never forget that your loved ones have been with you every step of the way. Class of 2014, don't you think your family and friends deserve another big round of applause?

(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: What happens next? It's up to you. But, remember, your journey wouldn't be easy. My journey wasn't easy. I moved to DC from New York to be the head chef of a Spanish Tapas restaurant Jaleo. Many people --

(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: Many people told my partners and me that it was a crazy idea. The location terrible. 7th and E? At the time it was no man's land. And a Tapas restaurant? No one knew what I was talking about. They would ask me, "Are you the bouncer?"

(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: Tapas, people. Tapas, not topless.

(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: I threw myself into it -- yeah.

(LAUGHTER)

>> Jose Andres: I couldn't help it. I threw myself into it. I worked hard in the kitchen. I greeted customers, trying to understand, trying to learn, trying to adapt. I listened, and believe me I made a lot of mistakes. As Winston Churchill said: Success is stumbling from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm. I stumbled. A lot. But, today, I am proud to say that Jaleo has become part of the DNA of this city. And Tapas has become part of the American mosaic.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Jose Andres: There will always be critics and naysayers telling you what you cannot do. That it is impossible. There will always be more people bringing you down than lifting you up. It seems that way sometimes. But let me tell you: Get a cocktail shaker, if you are over 21.

(LAUGHTER)
Jose Andres: Add your heart, your soul, your brain, your instinct and shake it hard. Serve it straight up. But let me give you a secret ingredient. Add a dash of the criticism on top. Because those naysayers play an important role too. They motivate you to rise above, to challenge yourself, to prove them wrong.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: As you move forward in your career you might look back and think that this school was the easy part. Maybe not easy, but predictable. And life, as you already probably know, is anything but predictable. Shortly after I arrive DC I met my wife Patricia. Before I learned how to be a boyfriend we got engaged. Before I learned how to be a husband I became a father. And then as my daughters grew I realized the easiest part of being a dad might have been changing diapers. So, what do you do when life takes an unexpected turn? Friends, my advice, don't follow a recipe. Funny coming from a cook, no? When we go by the book we lose our ability to adapt, to be creative. Sometimes you will find yourself without an ingredient or two. It will seem like everything is going wrong. If things don't go as expected, make the unexpected work in your favor. Change the name of the dish.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: That was my recipe for today. Don’t imitate what has already been done. Don’t go along with someone else's expectations for what your life should look like. Don't assume because things have been always been a certain way, they will never be any different. The challenges we face today, hunger, poverty, inequality, war, many others have been around forever. But that doesn't mean it always has to be this way. That is where we need you the most. We need you to come up with new solutions, and to do that new recipes for success must be written. You will write them. Success is no longer about the -- about achieving your goals. It's about using your skills and talents to do something bigger in the world. This is the new American Dream.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: For me, this is a way to tell a story about myself, far away places, the people I have met, the things I learn along the way. Your recipe should tell your story. In my classes at George Washington I heard your great ideas for how to make our world a better place. As you leave this university, you will start careers in cities around the world. Wherever you land, make an impact. One of our regulars at Jaleo was the last senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who helped revitalize downtown DC.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: He taught me that neighborhoods are transformed when we see potential where others only see disrepair. He told me that if you love America, America will always love you back. In November my wife and I became American citizens.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: We found a new place to belong. I raise my hand, I took the oath of citizenship. It was more than a formality. I felt responsible to speak up for those who are still searching for their place to belong. There are 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country, some who are students like you. These people are right in front of us, working hard to maintain our quality of life. I think they deserve a chance to belong, a chance to be part of the new American Dream.

(APPLAUSE)
Jose Andres: It's about seeing the potential where others see only disrepair. Immigration is not a problem for us to fix, it's an opportunity for us to seize.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Hash tag immigration reform. Many of you, many, you will end in positions of power. Your decisions, your actions will be solving tough challenges of today. Some of you may even end up at the top of that beautiful hill. Senator Harry Reid and representative Eric Cantor both graduated from George Washington.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: We all come from different places and perspectives, but we all belong to this university, to this planet. Today we are 6,000 graduates strong joining more than a quarter million George Washington alumni in 150 countries. You see how powerful this is? We have a big Army. We have the opportunity to change the world and shape the new American Dream, but only if we work together.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: I became a cook thanks to my father showing me how to control the fire. That same knowledge also taught me that my profession has the power to better the world. In my restaurants I was happy to feed the few. But I started to think: What if, together, we could feed the many? I joined DC Central Kitchen 20 years ago as a young volunteer peeling potatoes with harmless ex-convicts ex-drug addicts and sharing stories while feeding thousands a day. Robert Egger, my hero, the founder, always told me: "Too often charity is about the redemption of the giver, not the liberation of the receiver." And we need to change that.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: These words were on my mind when I first visited Haiti weeks after the earthquake. I didn't want to throw money at the problem, but instead to invest in sustainable solutions. For Haitians it means bringing clean cookstoves that improve their health. It's not about giving bread to orphans, it's building a bakery that can fit an orphanage and sell the bread in the city. It's not giving food to school children but starting a farm that can feed the children who are in the market.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Each of you has unique talents, build the fire, embrace your passions and profession, along the way you will find opportunities to serve in your communities and around the world. George Washington you already been, this year, more than a quarter million hours of volunteer work. Don't stop. We need you.

(APPLAUSE)

Jose Andres: Sometimes our journeys might feel uncertain and without purpose. But every step we take brings us closer to understanding why we are here. My favorite Spanish poet Antonio Machado once said, "... your footsteps are the path and nothing more, there is no path, the path is made by walking." Start walking! I will be watching, we will be watching to see what path you create. My name is Jose Andres, and I am a cook, and I am so proud of all of you. Gracias.

(APPLAUSE)

Steve Lerman: Graduates: Commencement is a time to celebrate your accomplishments. But it's also a time to reflect on what comes next. Not so much in specific terms but rather in the broader sense of what it means to be a citizen of our world and how you might draw upon what
you have learned to become even more engaged in our society. At the George Washington University we help you along with traditional graduation ritual, the charge to the graduates. President Knapp, I invite you to join me at the podium to offer your charge to the graduating class.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steven Knapp: Ladies and gentlemen, I now have the honor of welcoming our new graduates to the lifelong and worldwide community of George Washington University alumni. Class of 2014, you are exceptional men and women and I am proud to call you graduates of this great university. This is a very significant day for you as for the family and friends who supported you throughout your educational journey. We gather at this majestic setting on the National Mall to celebrate your accomplishments, applaud your hard work and perseverance and honor your commitment to serve as active and engaged citizens of your communities, your nations and the world. Graduates, I charge you to keep alive the spirit, the energy, the imagination and the commitment to service that have won our admiration during your years in our midst. I charge you to keep alive the curiosity that has guided you through your studies here, so that whatever work you undertake will constantly be refreshed by new knowledge. And I charge you to nourish the respect that you have learned for all persons, especially those whose cultures, traditions and opinions differ from your own. You are our future. We depend upon you to repair what earlier generations have broken, to build what we have left unbuilt, to learn what we have not yet learned, to heal what we have so far left unhealed. And as you go forth to do these things, always know that at the George Washington University, you have a home in the heart of this nation's capital. Congratulations and best wishes to you all!

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: Ladies and gentlemen, the president of the university will now confer the bachelor's, master's doctoral and professional degrees. I ask the Deans to rise and come forward in the order of the founding of their schools. Graduates: As your Dean announces degrees from your college or school please rise and remain standing until all of the degrees of the university are called. For degrees in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Dean Ben Vinson III.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Ben Vinson, dean of the Columbian College of Arts and Science: President Knapp, it is with great pride that I present the candidates for the following degrees: Associate in arts, Bachelor of arts, Bachelor of fine arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of arts, Master of fine arts, Master of science, Master of forensic sciences, Master of philosophy, Master of psychology, Master of public administration, Master of public policy, Doctor of psychology, and Doctor of philosophy.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Ben Vinson: These candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: For degrees in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Dean Jeffrey Akman.

>> Jeffrey Akman, dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences: President Knapp, I am very pleased to present the candidates for the following degrees: Associate in science, Bachelor of Science in health sciences, Master of science in health sciences.

(APPLAUSE)
Jeffrey Akman: Doctor of Medicine.
(APPLAUSE)

Jeffrey Akman: Doctor of physical therapy.
(APPLAUSE)

Jeffrey Akman: These candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated, and the faculty ask that these degrees be conferred.
(APPLAUSE)

Steve Lerman: For degrees in the law school, interim Dean Gregory Maggs.
(APPLAUSE)

Gregory Maggs, interim dean of the Law School: President Knapp, it's my pleasure to present the candidates for the following degrees: Juris Doctor. Master of laws. These candidates have completed all of the requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.
(APPLAUSE)

Steve Lerman: For degrees in the school of engineering and applied science, Dean David Dolling.

David Dolling, dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Science: President Knapp, it is an honor to present to you the candidates for the following degrees: Bachelor of arts, Bachelor of Science, Master of science, applied scientist, engineer, Doctor of philosophy, and Doctor of science. These candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.
(APPLAUSE)

Steve Lerman: For degrees in the graduate school of education and human development.
(APPLAUSE)

Michael Feuer, dean of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development: President Knapp, I am proud to present the candidates for the following degrees: Master of arts in education and human development, Master of arts in teaching, Master of education, Education Specialist, and Doctor of education.
(APPLAUSE)

Michael Feuer: These extraordinary candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty of asks that the degrees be conferred.

Steve Lerman: For degrees in the School of Business, interim Dean Christopher Kayes.
(APPLAUSE)

Chris Kayes, interim dean of the School of Business: President Knapp, it is a great pleasure that I present the candidates for the following degrees: Bachelor of accountancy, Bachelor of business administration, Master of accountancy, Master of business administration. Master of science in business analytics. Master of science in finance. Master of finance and information
systems technology. Master of Science in project management. Master of tourism administration. And Doctor of philosophy. These candidates completed all requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: For candidates in the Elliott School of International Affairs, Dean Michael Brown.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Michael Brown, dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs: President Knapp, on behalf of the faculty of the School of International Affairs, the most dynamic School of International Affairs in the world.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

>> Michael Brown: I have the honor to present the candidates for the following degrees: Bachelor of arts. Master of arts. Master of international policy and practice. Master of international studies. These candidates have completed their degree requirements and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: For the Milken Institute School of Public Health, Michael and Lori Milken, Dean of Public Health Lynn Goldman.

>> Lynn Goldman, Michael and Lori Milken Dean of Public Health of the Milken Institute School of Public Health: Steven Knapp, it's a great honor to present the candidates for the degrees: Bachelor of science. Master of science. Master of public health. Master of health services administration, and Doctor of public health. These candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: For the College of Professional Studies, Dean Ali Eskandarian.

>> Ali Eskandarian, dean of the College of Professional Studies: President Knapp, second in only to the Elliott School of International Affairs.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Ali Eskandarian: Sorry, the president says we are first, so -- first?

(LAUGHTER)

>> Ali Eskandarian: Tied.

>> Ali Eskandarian: I am very proud -- I am very proud to present the candidates for the following degrees: Associate in professional studies, Bachelor of professional studies and Master of professional studies. These candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated, and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred.

(APPLAUSE)

>> Steve Lerman: For the School of Nursing, Dean Jean Johnson.

(APPLAUSE)
Jean Johnson, dean of the School of Nursing, presented to President Knapp the graduating class of the very best School of Nursing in the country. (APPLAUSE)

Jean Johnson: And the candidates for the following degrees: Bachelor of science in nursing, Master of science in nursing, and Doctor of nursing practice. These candidates have completed all requirements for the degrees indicated and the faculty asks that the degrees be conferred. (APPLAUSE)

Steven Lerman: Will all of the candidates in the Class of 2014 not yet standing, please rise? President Knapp, before you stand the candidates for bachelor's, master's doctoral and professional degrees of the George Washington University.

Steven Knapp: By virtue of the authority granted by the Congress of the United States of America, vested in the board of trustees of the George Washington University and by the trustees of the university delegated to me, I hereby confer your degrees and declare you fully entitled to all of their rights, honors, privileges, and responsibilities. (APPLAUSE)

Steven Knapp: And now, as a symbol of your new status as university graduates, you may move the tassels on your caps from right to left. (APPLAUSE)

Steven Knapp: Congratulations to you all! (APPLAUSE)

Steven Knapp: Congratulations graduates. Please join Millicent Scarlett in singing your alma mater, the words are on the back of your program, and then please remain standing for the academic recession. (Music.)

Millicent Scarlett: (Singing.) (APPLAUSE)

(End of Ceremony)