

President's Remarks  
Commencement 2007  
May 13, 2007

Graduates, you are a very special class to me because most of us arrived here together in the summer of 2003. Our freshman year was filled with firsts: The first – *and only* – time to wear a Heidelberg beanie. First T Bridge. First visit to the Clover Club. First Battle of the Bands. First Greek Sing. First tater tots at Hoernemann. Most everything was new and exciting.

At our first convocation in August 2003 with many of these family members looking on, I said, “For those of you aiming to graduate in 2007, that year must seem a long, long way away.” Now we are here – commencement 2007. Finally. But I know for most of you it came much more quickly than you ever expected.

Today you can look back and measure your time at Heidelberg by such things as: hundreds of downloaded songs – all legal, of course. Dozens of friends added to your Facebook site. Four OAC championships in baseball and wrestling. Three Heidelberg Idols. Two Heidelberg National Champions. And one glorious graduation day. And ... thankfully ... no more nights watching Sanjaya!

Regardless of how many years you have spent at Heidelberg, you will measure your time here in much more important ways – by the feelings of your heart and the reflections of your mind. By the friends you have made. The service you have provided. The confidence you have developed. The knowledge you have gained. And the memories you will treasure.

You, our graduates, have been changed by this place, these faculty, your classmates. You are not only smarter, but wiser. You learned much from your academic experience – in class and beyond.

For example, Megan Orloski spent time at the Columbus Children's Research Institute virology lab and Mayo Clinic, while pursuing a double major in biology and chemistry. She now has a full ride scholarship to pursue a Ph.D. at Duke University. Each of you made life-long friends and will be leaving us with wonderful memories. Many of you will long remember Brett Peebles performing in Rock Creek Cafe, at the Battle of the Bands or as part of the Heidelberg Idol competition.

Others will remember Kasey Hill as an outstanding all-conference soccer player and scholar-athlete. And who will forget the transformation of personalities that took place when the zoot suit hats and sunglasses were put on by Devin Bramel, Kerry Gretsinger and Derek Meilaender as they played for the Heidelberg Jazz Band.

You have answered my challenge to make Heidelberg “a place of uncommon compassion” by using your opportunities to benefit others. You have run, sung, walked

and danced for charities, turning your energy and exuberance into financial support for worthy groups.

Greg Trumble will continue your legacy of service because after he graduates today, Greg will begin his new job as the Vista Volunteer Coordinator for the Heidelberg campus. Joel McMichael and Brett Green will also continue to serve – but in a different way. At a ceremony I attended earlier today, they were commissioned into the United States Army. Congratulations and thanks to both Brett and Joel for your service to our country.

Four years ago I came to Heidelberg because of its 150-year record of academic excellence, tradition of service to the community and the extraordinary sense of family that exists on the campus and among our graduates. Today that sense of family is even more poignant to me because shortly I will be handing my daughter her Heidelberg degree. As a father, I am not only proud that Adrea is graduating from Heidelberg, but also that she handled the role of the president's daughter with such poise, dignity and respect.

There are other special Heidelberg family connections that we are celebrating today. Mark Grine is receiving his master's degree in education, a department in which his wife, Lori, is a member of our faculty. In a month's time, Mark will be in the audience as Lori receives her Ph.D. from Ohio State. Twin brothers Dan and Brandon Gilbert will both be receiving degrees in health and physical education today.

And Julie Hada is the last of the Hada children to graduate from the 'Berg. Her dad, Joe, and a brother and sister are Heidelberg alums. Jared Woodland's grandmother, Helen Holcomb, is here with the family today. She graduated from Heidelberg 71 years ago in 1936. Welcome home, Helen!

Your class banner proclaims: "Carpe Diem," or Seize the Day! I ask you to seize this day. Appreciate its significance to you, your family, your friends and to Heidelberg. And, as Robin Williams said to his students in "Dead Poet's Society," "Make your lives extraordinary."

Your Heidelberg education has prepared you to do just that. It has empowered you to create change. It requires you to give back and to come back. Use all you have gained, all you have learned, all of your ability, to live out our mission statement ... "to lead a life of purpose with distinction."

Graduates, with my congratulations, know that you also have my gratitude for being a part of the Heidelberg family, and my best personal wishes as you begin your life's journey. Thank you.