

# Graduation Thank You Speech

21 May 2017

Thank you very much President Hutchinson. I am overwhelmed with pride and am very thankful for this wonderful recognition. As I have become more and more dedicated to Chico State over the last 12 years, I never dreamed something like this honor would be given to me. Becoming a community volunteer to this wonderful university has been one of the highlights of my life. Even though this happened after I retired from my profession, it has kept me engaged in significant work that has the goal of helping to improve University Public Education in this state, right here in Chico, California. So many articles give advice to people like me going into retirement: move to a small town with a university, get involved in something meaningful, and do your best in using your experience and contacts to give something back. That's what I set out to do.

In the late 1990's, I realized, as did many of my colleagues, the need to attract young men and women into management positions in the Heavy Construction Materials business, particularly in the Concrete Industry, which was my career for almost 40 years. This large industry, rated the 6<sup>th</sup> largest growth industry in the US, includes Portland Cement, Aggregates, Equipment, Chemicals, Control Systems, and Concrete Construction. Up until 1995, there was no education anywhere in the US providing a specific degree from a university for students wanting to get an education to work in management in this industry. Several forward thinking senior executives got together and developed a curriculum that married Concrete and Materials Technology with Business Management to design the Concrete Industry Major as a 4 year university degree program. The Concrete Industry Management Program, aka "CIM Program", is now well established at 4 highly rated Universities across

**the United States, with Chico State being one of them. Our tenure here is now 11 years and we are rapidly growing. Recently a highly respected market research firm survey tells us there is current and continuing need to provide more than 500 graduates per year to fill management positions in this industry. We are working on it, and so far the 4 CIM Universities have produced over 1000 graduates, almost all working in management positions in the industry they trained for. You can see the great opportunity ahead for CIM and its graduates.**

**We could not have found a better home anywhere in California. After 11 years we are doing very well. Our CIM Program is maturing and improving every year and our student population is growing, attracting students from many of the western states. Our Chico CIM Patrons is a non-profit foundation made up of 43 companies, from small companies, to some of the largest multinationals in the world. Also we are fortunate to have 24 generous individuals, that yearly gift to the University Foundation, through the CIM Patrons. We are proud to report that our total gifting is now approaching 4 million dollars, both from regional support, as well as from the CIM National Steering Committee. CIM Patronage is continuing to provide for student enhancement in many ways, including providing scholarships to all CIM students who need a scholarship, providing for student and faculty travel to many industry events, helping to fund lecturers and research, as well as help fund much of the cost to improve and modernize our lab facilities in the 50 year old Langdon Hall.**

**To the graduates and to all of you here today, I hope you won't forget the example we are setting. Please do what you can to help support Chico State, and the Colleges of Business and Engineering.**

**When I did what you are doing today, 51 years ago, at another fine California State University, I was full of hopes and dreams for my future. I sincerely hope you feel the same way. This is one of the**

most important days of your lives and you have worked very hard to reach this milestone. I know your families, particularly your parents, grandparents, siblings, children in some cases, friends and fellow graduates, are all very proud of you, as are the teachers you are leaving today. Many of you already have jobs waiting and are beginning a challenging and rewarding career path. To you, I say please remember when you begin your new jobs; it's all about work ethic, enthusiasm, and good attitude. Remember, no question is too frivolous. Managers like new hires to ask questions. You will probably make mistakes. Most of us do. That's OK, because that is how you learn. But, showing up on time, or even early, is good. Having a positive attitude, plus enthusiasm, will get you promoted faster than anything else there is. I know that is the truth.

For those of you not yet hooked up, your main job now is to find a job, and hopefully one that is in keeping with what you have trained for. That means working every day to improve your resume.

Outreach means lots of phone calls and emails to run down leads, and networking with your fellow graduates and friends already working. All of the electronic communication tools available to you make this job easier than ever before. There is tremendous opportunity out in the world today, and if you work at it, you will find it. I promise.

“Today Decides Tomorrow”, Chico State’s Motto, and a modified version of President Hutchinson’s inaugural theme “Together We Will”, appropriately defines your mission going forward.

I want to also warmly acknowledge so many good friends that I know had a hand in this day for me. In addition to President Hutchinson, I want to thank Dr. Mike Ward, past Dean of both of your colleges, and Interim Provost; Dr. Ricardo Jacquez, Dean of Engineering, Construction Management, and Computer Science; and Ahmed Boura, VP of Advancement and Chief Executive of the University Foundation.

**And so many other dedicated Administration, Faculty and Staff, that have worked alongside me and the Patrons to make this University/Industry partnership one that really works. My appreciation also goes to the Chico State Academic Senate that had to approve my nomination. I also want to “shout out” to all the fantastic CIM Patrons that provide the funds we put to work here at Chico State. Their generous Time, Talent and Treasure, is what makes our program such a successful joint venture. I am also most thankful to the CIM dedicated and talented teaching staff, both past and present, who take on the responsibility of providing the teaching, advising and mentoring skills so necessary to carry on the important role of faculty. And thanks to my many community colleagues that serve the University Foundation, guarding and enhancing the important assets of the Chico State Endowment. I also want to mention, and thank the wonderful co-chair of the CIM Patrons, Dana Davis, President of Teichert Materials, as well as the Officer’s and Board Members of the Patrons. And last, but most important, to my beautiful wife, Kelly, thank you for your support. You have stood beside me and helped me every step of the way. I couldn’t have done it without you. I am also very fortunate to have many family members here today, including my Mother, Virginia Brown, 94 years young, sister Jamie Burghardt, and my son, Michael Guerrero, to help share in this wonderful day.**

**In closing, I am very proud to be here today, graduating with you as a member of the Chico State graduating class of 2017. I didn’t do it your way, but I am just as proud of my “honorary degree” as you are of your earned degree. I want to tell you all I am truly having a memorable “Chico Experience”, and I am very proud that from now on I will be a “Wildcat”, just like you.**

**Good Day, and Thank You very much.**