

## 2017 UWC-USA Graduation Remarks

Good morning! Families and friends of our 2017 UWC-USA graduates; trustees, volunteers, and donors who have contributed to make their education possible; alumni who today welcome them into their fold; faculty and staff who have engaged and supported them over these two years; and first year students who have learned and lived with them--thank you for being here to share this special occasion.

Class of 2017, in a spirit of gratitude, please join me in a round of applause for all of the people who have supported the success you celebrate today.

Of course the day belongs most especially to you, our UWC-USA Class of 2017. It is a day that marks your hard work and the academic achievement that has come with it.

At this stage in your life, academic success is surely very much on your mind. It anchors your resume. It tells others something about you: how gifted you are in this or that subject, what kind of work ethic you have.

But as UWC graduates, the day marks something more than your academic success, more than anything that can be put on a resume. It is this “something more” that I hope you will reflect on today and take with you.

This “something more” is what we call “the UWC experience”. It is quite remarkable if you consider it.

- Membership in a community that is a microcosm of the world, that requires international and intercultural understanding and encourages celebration of the differences that all too often divide people and nations
- Engagement in real and important opportunities to discover your capacity for personal responsibility and integrity
- Living independently in a community that requires mutual responsibility and respect—for one another and for your environment
- Serving others with compassion and taking up causes with conviction
- And doing all of this with a sense of idealism that trumps the scale and scope of the global challenges we are reminded of daily

In short, this day marks a moment for reflection on UWC’s challenge to to live by a set of values in a world more concerned with trends and diversions.

How did you do? And even more importantly, how will you do?

Because your UWC experience doesn’t end today. It becomes your own. What you do with it, how you live it, will determine what kind of family member you are, what kind of friend, what kind of partner, what kind of citizen, what kind of leader.

Our wish for you as you leave us today is simple: that you take the UWC values you practiced here and live them. Live them everyday and in every setting. Live them out loud, whether or not anyone is there to see or to hear.

And when you fail to live them, think back to your experience here. Remember when you were at your most idealistic, your best. Remember when you gave others the opportunity to be at their best. Draw from that experience.

The world is changed one person at a time, one moment at a time. Use your moments wisely: they are the only ones you get. And enjoy this moment. Enjoy it for your individual accomplishment. Enjoy it for what it means to those who have supported you. And enjoy it for what you have contributed as part of something bigger than yourself: this community and its efforts on behalf of a better world.