



COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS 2013

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Mount Sinai: Promoting Innovation through Imagination and Passion

Welcome to the 44th Commencement of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

Family members, Trustees, Faculty, Alumni and Honored Guests, sitting before you is the Class of 2013, the next generation of Leaders of American Medicine and Biomedical Science, who will advance and accelerate the revolutionary paradigm shifts that are changing the foundation of Health Care Delivery and the promise of Biomedical Research.

We are very proud of the phenomenal accomplishments of the Class of 2013.

What have they done?

- Made breakthrough discoveries that will lead to better treatments for mental illness, infectious disease, heart disease, and cancer.
- Published in the Best Scientific Journals and won prestigious National Awards.
- Led initiatives to provide badly needed medical care to underserved communities locally, the East Harlem Health Outreach Partnership, and throughout the world – including a telemedicine program in Afghanistan.
- Developed programs, such as Med Start, to increase basic health knowledge and promote interest in science and medicine among middle school students in Harlem.
- Established advocacy groups such as Women in Science and Equal Opportunity in Science.
- And, when crises occurred, like Hurricane Sandy, they responded like Heroes.

Amazing!...

Let's acknowledge the Class of 2013.

We all know that our graduates did not get to this moment of high achievement by themselves.

As Isaac Newton said...

"If I have seen farther than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

Let us have a moment of silence to remember the loved ones who supported our students during their long journey to this day, but are no longer with us.

Class of 2013 – Please stand and demonstrate your appreciation, with thunderous applause, for your family, friends, and mentors who are sharing this special day with you.

As much as Commencement is a time for our graduates to remember, reflect, and look ahead, it is also a time for Mount Sinai to contemplate our role in the future of Science, Technology and Medicine.

American Medicine and Biomedical Research are in crisis. Health care spending is out of control and continuing to spiral skyward... Our delivery systems and administrative processes are outdated and inefficient... And funding for biomedical research is inadequate and shrinking. Consistent with Thomas Kuhn's view, a revolution is brewing!

- Along with other top academic medical centers, Mount Sinai is witnessing the powerful forces of change that are impacting how medical care will be delivered to the American Public.
- We are leading the way in developing new models of coordinated health care delivery which provide high quality, patient-centered care at lower cost.

- Ultimately, we will harness the full force of social media and digital platforms to connect the Hospital, the Outpatient Clinic, and patients' homes in order to maximize our ability to promote wellness, monitor disease, and prevent episodes of emergency care.
- A new era of Personalized and Precision Medicine are upon us. To realize the possibilities in this vast arena, Mount Sinai is investing heavily in Genomic Research, Digital Information Technology, Experimental Therapeutics, and Big Data Analytic Platforms that will result in a better understanding of the roots of disease and more effective targeted therapies.
- To achieve these goals, we must possess the intellectual courage to challenge tradition and dogma, the imagination to achieve true innovation, and the passion to deliver on our promise of Transformative Discovery.

Jon Gartner in his book "The Idea Factory" profiled Bell Labs, which from the 1920s through the 1980s, was the most innovative scientific organization in the world.

It was where the future was invented - the transistor, the laser, silicon solar cell, a computer operating system, communication satellites, the cellular telephone system, and fiber optic cable systems.

The Bells Labs Formula for success provides Mount Sinai a roadmap to invent the Future of Medicine:

- Visionary uncompromising leadership
- A culture of institutional innovation
- Support for a critical mass of talented scientists
- The freedom to seek out new and fundamental ideas
- A culture of team work and mentorship
- A spirit of intellectual ferment—one that evolved from blending entrepreneurial and academic inquiry, with a passion to achieve things that seem impossible!

We must believe as the anthropologist Margaret Mead did...

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has"

Mount Sinai remains true to our original mission imagined by our founders over 160 years ago.

J.K. Rowling, the author whose imagination has captivated us through Harry Potter's adventures, has said...

"Imagination is not only the unequalled human capacity to envision that which is NOT, and therefore the fount of all invention and innovation. In its most transformative and revelatory capacity – it is the power that enables us to empathize with humans whose experiences we have never had... The power of human empathy leads to collective action and saves lives."

We at Mount Sinai—our doctors, our scientists, our students—will always devote our talents, our energy, our resources to those who need us most – the poor, with no voice and no power.

And finally, to the Class of 2013 I leave you with the words of a New Jersey poet:

*"Now everyone has the right to live
The right to a chance to give what they have to give
The right to fight for the things they believe
For the things that come to them in dreams
Follow that dream wherever it may lead
Come on yeah, follow that dream wherever it may lead..."*

Thank you!