

## GRADUATION SPEECH AT INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

### Speech Outline

#### Opening Remarks:

Thank you Dr. Massey and Dr. Locke, faculty, parents, friends and supporters, for the opportunity to share a few thoughts. Some 29 years ago I remember sitting in a similar position as many of you are here today. Contemplating my next step with plans to move into my first job. A number of thoughts raced through my mind (like I am sure are racing through your minds!) about how the future chapters of my book would be written and how my career might unfold.... well allow me today to convey some hope....your future chapters are being written today....with your step across this stage. Nick Carter stated it like this, "It's like Forrest Gump said, 'Life is like a box of chocolates.' Your career is like a box of chocolates - you never know what you're going to get. But everything you get is going to teach you something along the way and make you the person you are today. That's the exciting part - it's an adventure in itself." And also this quote from Lyndon B. Johnson, "Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose."

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### **You're the present and future:**

For some of you this is only one of the many chapters at this point in your life; but, you should know that there are many chapters left to be written, no matter how long your book might be at this point. There will be chapters written with all of the human emotions and with all of the elements that make for a great novel. With your graduation you have been given the keyboard to write your life's novel.... and along the way make an impact on this world! "The future depends on what you do today." Gandhi. So that makes this an exciting time.... a new chapter in your history was written today as a result of your accomplishments... and your book's next chapter has now advanced another page. To get to this point today, I know that along the way you have made many sacrifices, worked a little harder, and added a few extra steps to your day to accomplish what you have done, but your choice to move forward and invest in your life has and will make a big difference. I am reminded of Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken":

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

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Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

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Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same, 10

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way, 15  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

You have chosen the right road and made the investment in education.

“No other investment yields as great a return as the investment in education. An educated workforce is the foundation of every community and the future of every economy.” By completing your work here at Indian River State College, you have made a strong investment in your future and that of your community. Please also know that, our state and our nation needs you, and just beyond the jobs that you will hold; so remember, “A good job is more than just a paycheck. A good job fosters independence and discipline, and contributes to the health of the community.” James H. Douglas, Jr.

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### **Some Thought from Others**

- “Have the nerve to go into unexplored territory. Be brave enough to live life creatively. The creative is the place where no one else has ever been. It is not the previously known. You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition.” – Alda
- “Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.” Booker T Washington
- “Life is ten percent what happens to you and ninety percent how you respond to it.” Lou Holtz

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### Summary

You have made a good decision and have completed the actions and hard work to complete your degree program and that is exciting. I recognize and commend you on your hard work to make it to this point today. It has been said that, “Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all.” Sam Ewing. You turned up and now have accomplished much. Your futures are now more secure and brighter because of this educational experience. You have proven that you are willing to take the action needed to be successful. Herbert Spencer said that “The great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.” and Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” You now have the foundational tools to accomplish much in this world. What will you do with the tools that you have earned? Go forth and do great things and change this world for the better. Congratulations on your graduation accomplishment.