

Ray Ivany
Doctor of Civil Laws
Acadia University

- Hello. My name is Ray Ivany and I'm here today to address the graduating Class of 2020 at Acadia and to receive an honorary degree from the university. I'm very grateful for this recognition, but today has special meaning for me because of the Class of 2020.

The graduates will remember that I welcomed them into Acadia in September 2016, and I knew I was retiring. So, I welcomed them but then told them I'm not going to be here for most of your time, but I will come to your graduation and never thought we'd be doing it in the middle of a global pandemic but I'm so pleased to be with you today.

And I'm also pleased to be a member of the Class of 2020. It's something that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

To graduates, every time I've been at Convocation at Acadia, I've used Nelson Mandela's words to cause both the grads and all of us to think a little bit. And Mandela had a beautiful, beautiful expression. He said, "There's no passion in playing small. There's no passion for settling for a life that's less than you're capable of living."

So, for each of you, I want you to think for a moment, back to sitting in Convocation Hall in 2016 and think of who you were as a person, at that time. Think of the things that you thought were important, the way you viewed the world and think of where you are today. Think of where you were in May of last year, as you formally graduated. Think of how much you changed. Think of how much more of a person you were, how you filled out, how you grabbed on to life and took Mandela's words and turned yourself into something really special.

Your first year post-graduation has been in the middle of a global pandemic. Think of how you've dealt with that and how you've overcome challenges. That's the secret.

You already know the secret to Mandela's words. You know that when you challenge yourself, you unlock some of that potential that we all have inside ourselves. So, my wish for you is to continue to do that. You'll have a rich and rewarding life. I want you to work hard. I want you to be kind. I want you to think about others. Have a generosity of spirit to give back. All of those things are part of the Acadia tradition. And all of those things are now woven into your life.

So, I wish you well and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for making me part of your class, the Class of 2020 at Acadia University.