

**ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY, WORCESTER
GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS –
MAY 18, 2024
CAROLYN CLANCY:**

**GOOD MORNING GRADUATES OF THE CLASS
OF 2024! And, Thank you, Dean Schandel,
for your warm and kind introduction. I'm
humbled to have the opportunity to speak to
you all today. As a proud 1982 graduate of
Assumption, and someone who has been
involved with the University for so many
years, this is a particularly nice gift for me.
I want to start by extending my heartfelt
congratulations to all of you for this special
accomplishment. Whether you are in the**

Business Program or the Helping Professions Program, achieving your graduate degree is an accomplishment that is nothing short of impressive. And something I know you ALL worked VERY hard for! You are now in the *rarified air* of less than 14% of the U.S. population to have dedicated the time, energy and sacrifice to obtain this advanced degree.

A huge thanks and congratulations also go out to your amazing family, friends, and support group. As they say, behind every great person is a “village”. No one gets there alone! And finally, a special thanks to our faculty and administration.

When President Weiner and the Trustees asked me to be the commencement speaker, I was truly honored....*and candidly kind of terrified ... it made me think of my own graduate school commencement.....* where after receiving my degree, I proceeded to trip down the stairs.... *Plunging myself* may be a better description, making *so much* noise as **I bounced and rolled down the steps that it brought the celebration to an abrupt halt until I got myself up and everyone knew **I was okay. I'm still traumatized by it.... *and* my family and friends have not let me live it down! SO, my first words of advice****

are.....*simply* be careful going up and down these ramps. 😊

Now, I'd like to share some deeper words of wisdom with you.

Today, YOU are at the beginning of a new journey of limitless and exciting possibilities.

Every day, we are re-writing history in health care, counseling, business, technology, education, social media, and online.

Everything is changing!! There isn't an education in the world that would be able to definitively give you the exact answers to all the problems we are trying to solve now, **AND**

all the great opportunities in front of us in this country and world.

To thrive in our dynamic world, we need leaders who can navigate through uncertainty, be flexible, think smart and provide value. YOU ARE THOSE LEADERS!

So, my message to you today is do not hesitate and have no fear to lead! In fact, EMBRACE it! Seize the leadership moments you'll encounter. Lead by example, stand out and make an impact. As an Assumption graduate, you are ready to think and act like a leader. Most importantly the world needs your skills and YOU to lead!

Start by lifting others up and helping others do *their* best! None of us in this world get things done alone. The best experiences I have had included being part of high performing and winning teams. Teams *and* great people need a great leader to get the best out of them. Being a great leader, coach, mentor, or educator **MATTERS! It matters to the people you are privileged to lead, and it helps them excel and get to the next level.**

I was fortunate to have had so many mentors and leaders in my career who empowered me, guided me, inspired me, AND challenged

**(usually long before I was “really” ready),
pushed me to learn new things, put me into
many uncomfortable assignments that
stretched me,**

**and always had me, as one manager said,
“barely able to breath and, barely able to see
over the bow of the boat”. Most importantly
they believed in me and my capabilities....
*often even beyond what I thought I could do.***

Be the leader that lifts others up!

**Second, push the boundaries!!! Don't settle
for mediocracy or complacency, or just simply
keeping things “the same”. Nothing in this**

world changes without inspirational leaders who have the courage to THINK BIG, push boundaries and who also have the courage and endurance to lead in the face of often tough obstacles and critics.

When I started at Fidelity Investments in the late 90's, we were still a relatively small firm.

Every day felt like we were innovating and pushing the boundaries of technology, improving things for our customers and growing businesses. *It was energizing, AND absolutely a blast!* When I left a couple years ago, the revenue had exploded, and we had grown to over 70,000 employees. I was proud

to be part of a culture of big ideas that drove such explosive growth and doing such good things to help improve people's financial lives.

Another great example is the current disruption in the mental health space where we're seeing many companies launching hybrid or fully online mental health counseling and therapy sites. This innovative idea has paved the way to reach and help far more people than we could have ever imagined.

Third, celebrate the wins, and push through and persevere through the losses or down times. The reality is that there are times you will succeed greatly and times you just won't. Like any sports team, you just don't always win. You must learn from your failures, pick yourself up, and keep going! My career often felt like the stock market with lots of ups and downs and gyrations. But, like the market, over time, with hard work, it did go up. The ability to keep at it, despite obstacles, is the key to reaching your goals. Assumption grads are known for this grit and hard work and being able to push through. *Hard work always wins!*

AND, as you are doing today, CELEBRATE the wins personally and with your teams and support group. Have FUN and celebrate all the good things you've accomplished, and the successes in your life!

In closing, I'd like to share one of my favorite quotes that has always resonated with me and inspired me. It's from Teddy Roosevelt (*Sorry Mr. President, it's not about Madison or one of the other great President's or people in history you've written about*).

In Roosevelt's Man in the Arena speech, he said I will paraphrase...

It is not the critic who counts... The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; who strives valiantly; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

**So, I encourage all of you to get in the arena!
You're all going into *such* noble professions,
and I know you will make them count!**

**I wish you the best in all your future
endeavors and my hope is you come back to**

share your well-earned wisdom and experiences with other Assumption students in the future.

On behalf of all of us, welcome to Alumni status at Assumption University.

THANK YOU

GUERRA: goes to Podium – offers a word of thanks to CAROLYN CLANCY

CLANCY RETURNS TO SEAT

GUERRA: STEPS FORWARD
