

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Good evening. We are pleased to have you join us at Kent State University's 262nd commencement ceremony. Today you will witness a ceremony rich in tradition as we will recognize our doctoral graduates in a formal hooding ceremony. And we will bid farewell to those who have completed coursework for an advanced degree. Please remain seated until the president's party enters.

Our academic processional is led by Pamela Grimm, associate professor and chair of the faculty senate. The mace is a traditional ceremonial staff displayed as a symbol of authority. The mace being used was designed and crafted by alumnus Mr. Michael Jaszczak.

Following our mace bearer is the faculty of Kent State University. Our faculty is instrumental in making the day possible. Today's graduates can attest to how faculty have encouraged, supported, and expected the best from them. Their dedication has helped the spring 2019 graduates achieve the accomplishments we now celebrate. Without the faculty's commitment to academic inquiry and the students who carry on that commitment, we would not be here today.

Faculty members are wearing colorful and distinctive academic attire. As witnessed today, the robe is often black. However, academic institutions may sanction the use of other colors. The length of the robe, the width of the sleeves' borders, and the length of the hood increase with each advanced degree.

You will notice colors in the velvet hood borders. They represent the specific field of study in which the degree was earned. The colors of the lining identify the institution which granted the degree. This evening, recipients of a doctor of philosophy degree, also called a PhD, are awarded hoods trimmed in dark blue velvet. The silk lining of the hood is in a chevron pattern of blue and gold, Kent State's colors.

Now entering are the doctoral candidates. Accompanying the doctoral candidates are their dissertation directors. Leading the doctoral candidates is faculty marshal [INAUDIBLE] Temu, assistant professor in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Following the doctoral candidates are the advanced degree candidates. They are being led by faculty marshals Thomas Brewer, associate professor in the College of Public Health, and Sheryl Chatfield, assistant professor in the College of Public Health.

The advanced degree candidates are now entering the hall. Once again, they are being led by faculty marshals Thomas Brewer, associate professor in the College of Public Health, and Sheryl Chatfield, assistant professor in the College of Public Health.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise for the president's party. The president's party includes honored guests, registrars, university deans, and executive officers. Also with us this evening is our executive vice president and provost, Dr. Todd Diacon, and graduate student trustee Jessica Peck and our president and keynote speaker Dr. Beverly Warren.

President Warren, I declare that all are assembled and in order for Kent State University's 262nd commencement ceremony. I now ask Mackenzie Wells to lead us in singing the national anthem.

[MUSIC - "STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"]

(SINGING) O say can you see, by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming, whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight o'er the ramparts we watch'd were so gallantly streaming?

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air, gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Please be seated. It is my pleasure to introduce our executive vice president and provost Dr. Todd Diacon.

Thank you, Ms. Wells. At this time, I would like to take a moment to recognize our announcers, musicians, music director, vocalists, our mace bearer and marshals and members of the president's party. Also, members of the Board of Trustees joining us here tonight, please rise so that we may express our appreciation.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. And please be seated. It gives me great pleasure now to welcome the 12th president of Kent State University, Dr. Beverly Warren.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Provost Diacon. Good evening and welcome, Kent State University class of 2019.

[APPLAUSE]

It is an honor and a true joy of mine to share this special moment with you and your loved ones. First and foremost, I want to congratulate all of you for your remarkable achievements. You are now one of the talented who have chosen the path of advanced and enhanced knowledge and exploration and leadership, the path of an advanced degree. You join just 12% of all adults in the United States and only 9% of those under the age of 30 who have earned a graduate degree.

This Spring Commencement, we will award 972 advanced degrees, including 75 doctor of philosophy degrees and 100 doctor of podiatric medicine degrees. Our graduates today come from 37 states and 29 countries. And many of you in this room tonight are the first in your family to have earned an advanced degree.

And this journey was not one that you made alone. Our dedicated faculty helped illuminate the way as instructors and mentors, fellow seekers, and collaborators. So now look around you at this remarkable community of scholars, researchers, makers, creators, and performers which is forever bound together by this achievement and its shared experience. So again, congratulations to each of you on this landmark moment where you today will earn your advanced degree from Kent State University.

It is now my pleasure to welcome Jessica Peck, a graduate student herself and a member of the university's board of trustees.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, and good evening. On behalf of the board of trustees of Kent State University, I am thrilled to welcome you to the 262nd commencement ceremony. You are on the threshold of completing a great achievement, ready to step into your future fully equipped with a Kent State degree. As you begin this next chapter in your lives, I hope you will make every effort to stay connected to Kent State. But right now, I ask each of you to sit back and enjoy

these moments we will spend together. And remember that you are a part of Kent State's legacy, just as Kent State will be forever a part of your future.

Now it is my honor to introduce our keynote speaker and president, Dr. Beverly Warren. President Warren became Kent state's 12th president on July 1, 2014 and has used her time to lead the university in charting a course for its continued rise towards a distinctive Kent State. Under President Warren's leadership, the university produced the ambitious Strategic Roadmap to a Distinctive Kent State. The plan focuses on putting students first and on raising the profile of Kent State as one of the top public research universities in the nation, focusing on a distinctive blend of teaching, research, and creative excellence.

President Warren's passion for the power of education to change lives and communities can be seen in the initiatives that have led to enhanced pathways for student success, created greater access to higher education for students, advanced innovation throughout the university's eight-campus system, and supported students in high-impact experiences that lead to productive lives and careers. President Warren represents a truly transformative leader and inspires us all to be our best self. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Dr. Beverly Warren.

[APPLAUSE]

So thank you, Trustee Peck. Provost Diacon, deans and faculty, esteemed colleagues and guests, and, of course, all of you whose hard work has brought you to this special moment, our graduate students of Kent State, I want you to first start with please join in thanking the faculty and staff of this remarkable university for their guidance and insight which help make every student's journey possible. So please help me thank the faculty today.

[APPLAUSE]

Graduates, the honors conferred upon you today are some of the highest the academic world can offer. You will leave today with new letters after your name, credentials that will never expire. You have earned permanent membership in the global community of scholars. So I congratulate you on that achievement. And today we not only celebrate your recent accomplishments, we consider the possibilities that lie before you for no matter how distinguished the credential, if it is not activated as an engine of innovation and change, it remains merely a slip of paper in a frame on your wall.

How will you use this moment for good? Endowed now with scholarly success, what will be your next act? No matter the answer to that question, I know you to be women and men of unlimited energy and uncommon character. I have every confidence in you.

Let me share a few examples from your midst about what you have taught me over these years. You've heard the saying that when you find a calling you truly love, you never work a day in your life. At Kent State, we truly believe it. We say changing the world begins with finding your passion. But it turns out we mean more-- find something to love. Then prove it.

Many of you know that claiming you love something is not enough. Take Liz Baker-- as a doctoral student in psychology, Liz focused on her passion-- understanding dating violence and how to reduce the risk of becoming a victim.

It is possible to do this kind of work from a remote office or an academic enclave. But that's not Liz. She engaged with individuals in the community, running a real-world clinical trial to better understand violence in dating relationships. She became active in the Society for Prevention Research and led a Kent State team that won a national competition for their work. She earned a prestigious fellowship at Penn State where she translates research findings into practical policy. She helps her colleagues forge relationships with legislative staff so their work can inform policies that improve society and have a real-world impact.

And now Liz is off to the University of Calgary where she will continue to connect the dots between research, policy, and prevention programs. We are so proud to tell the many stories like Liz Baker's. Kent State challenged you to define and amplify your academic passion. Liz and so many of you have proven the power of not only finding something you love, but making it matter.

You could not be coming along at a better time for society, the country, and truly the world. This is no time to sit on the sidelines. It's really a time to make things happen. It was JK Rowling of *Harry Potter* fame who told another commencement audience, "we do not need magic to transform our world. We carry all the power we need inside ourselves already. We have the power to imagine better."

Some merely imagine something better, and that is their beginning and their end. As Kent State advanced degree holders, you start from that point, you jump into the noble fray of life, and bring your imagination to reality. I have a wonderful story here, too. A group of international graduate students in the College of Public Health were thinking about challenges immigrants face trying to assimilate into American life, hurdles they knew firsthand.

They did more than study the issue. They did more than talk about the issue. They imagined better. And working as a multidisciplinary, blended team and drawing on their own arrival experiences, the team built an app, the Togetherness app. It orients new arrivals to health and legal services, social events, even activities of daily life like how to order a cup of coffee in a new language. For strangers in a strange land, the app is as lifesaving as a Swiss Army knife.

Their Togetherness app took first place in an international competition for innovative ideas to address real-world problems. It's a unique, globally viable tool with the potential to improve the immigrant experience everywhere. It is at work in the real world because that's what we strive for at Kent State. We imagine better, then make it real and make it work.

This great student team and all of you excelled at a university that not only welcomes novel ideas and the entrepreneurial spirit, but it rewards those things. So to the Togetherness team from your Kent State family, we thank you. And a sense of family is really an important consideration.

As I said, today all of you join an elite community of scholars. But the Kent State way is not to wall ourselves off with our academic colleagues as some scholars might. We reach out. In my mind, I hear the echoes of the words and deeds of doctoral student Jessica Peck, who embodies our spirit of engaged scholarship. Jessica's work is focused on leadership dynamics and how to help more women succeed in leadership roles. Early on, she was inspired by one of our faculty members organizational psychologist Dr. Mary Hogue.

Dr. Hogue listened to Jessica's kernel of an idea and uttered one sentence that changed Jessica's life-- wow, you're really onto something here. And with that encouragement, Jessica immersed herself in her research, taught a class on underrepresented women in leadership, and developed her own abilities as a graduate student trustee. I've seen her in action.

Today she expands her scholarly family as she now becomes a member of the Cleveland State University faculty. Jessica told us that the mentorship and encouragement she received from the Kent State faculty motivated her to help lift other women into a community of strong female leaders. That is the true meaning of family. As you get older, you start to see strong families are where you find them and where you create them.

As you know, you and I are departing Kent State together. And many of us do not know precisely what lies ahead. Now a great credential carries a lot of power, but it may not always illuminate the future for us. But I know the world is about to discover what I already see. As newly minted advanced degree holders, you are already proven exceptional in every way. And as for me, I am truly better and stronger for having known you.

I will miss you, but I know you're moving on to take your place in the global family of scholars. Please savor that sense of satisfaction. It is truly well justified. But keeping your place in the global family of humanity and applying your gifts to improve the world, that should feel even better.

So now it is time to focus on what is next for you. One of my favorite poets, Mary Oliver, wrote, "the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting-- over and over announcing your

place in the family of things."

And so as you find your rightful place in the family of things, I urge you to find something important to love. Imagine something better, and make it real. Be the locomotives of the change the world needs so desperately. I pray your years at Kent State and your lifelong ties to our university family inspire you for the journey ahead and sustain you for the rest of your days.

Don't be strangers here because I cannot wait to see and hear what each of you will do next and how high you will rise. And as I, too, bid farewell, I say with heartfelt sincerity godspeed graduate class of 2019. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much for those words of wisdom, President Warren. We would now like to salute you with a special presentation. And on behalf of Kent State University, I'm honored to present you with this award for outstanding professional achievements and your dedication to Kent State University. Congratulations. Please join me here center stage.

[APPLAUSE]

I'm wearing two hats today. So thank you so much, Provost Diacon. And to this entire community, it has been a true joy and pleasure to be a part of the Kent State family. So now we are about a minute away from the heart of this special day, the awarding of your degrees. As a preface, I would like to underscore the fact that your degrees will bear the name of one of the nation's major research universities and one of the largest university systems in the country. We offer higher education's most advanced degree, the doctorate, in more than 50 areas.

Admission to a program of study and research leading to a doctoral degree is limited to individuals who undertake a dedicated, intensive, and focused effort. I think I can see some nods in the audience that know that is the case. By contributing to the expansion of knowledge, the doctoral candidates we honor today have earned recognition within the community of scholars. Melody Tankersley, dean of graduate studies, will preside over the presentation of the candidates for the doctoral degree.

Will the candidates for doctoral degrees please rise and remain standing?

[APPLAUSE]

President Warren, I proudly present the candidates for the doctoral degrees.

And upon the recommendation of the faculties concerned and by the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Kent State University, I confer upon you the doctoral degree appropriate to your field of study with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto. Congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

And you may be seated. And I will now ask the marshal to please bring the graduates forward to receive their recognition.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

--for the doctor of philosophy degree from the College of the Arts--

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the doctoral degree from the College of the Arts.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the doctor of philosophy degree from the College of Arts and Sciences.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the doctoral degree from the College of Arts and Sciences.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipient of the doctor of philosophy degree from the College of Business Administration, Jessica Ann Peck, hooded by Mary Hogue.

[APPLAUSE]

And congratulations to the recipient of the doctoral degree from the College of Business Administration.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the doctor of philosophy degree from the College of Communication and Information.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the doctoral degree from the College of Communication and information.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the doctor of audiology and doctor of philosophy degrees from the College of Education, Health and Human Services.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the doctoral degree from the College of Education, Health and Human Services.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipient of the doctor of nursing practice degree from the College of Nursing, Christina N. Gable, hooded by Lisa Onesko.

[APPLAUSE]

Congratulations to the recipient of the doctoral degrees from the College of Nursing and to all of our doctoral

degree recipients.

[APPLAUSE]

Kent State University offers more than 100 programs of graduate study at the master's level. Recipients of the master's degree have devoted at least one year of concentrated study in one of these programs. Melody Tankersley, dean of graduate studies, will present the master's and educational specialist degree candidates.

At this time, it is my privilege to introduce the candidates for an advanced degree. Would the master's and educational specialist candidates please rise and be recognized?

[APPLAUSE]

President Warren, I proudly present the candidates for the master's and educational specialist degrees.

And by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of Kent State University and upon the recommendation of the graduate faculty, I confer upon you the advanced degree appropriate to your field of study with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto. Congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

And you may be seated. And I will now ask the marshals to please bring the graduates forward to receive their individual recognition.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Aeronautics and Engineering.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Aeronautics and Engineering.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of the Arts.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of the Arts.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Arts and Sciences.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Arts and Sciences.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Business Administration.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Business Administration.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Communication and Information.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Communication and Information.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the educational specialist and master's degrees from the College of Education, Health and Human Services.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the educational specialist and master's degrees from the College of Education, Health and Human Services.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Nursing.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Nursing.

[APPLAUSE]

We now welcome the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Public Health.

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the master's degree from the College of Public Health. And congratulations to all of our advanced degree candidates.

[APPLAUSE]

And personally and as president and on behalf of the entire Kent State community, I extend heartfelt congratulations to all of today's graduates. We wish you well as you pursue the many opportunities awaiting you as Kent State University advanced degree holders. And most of all, we look forward to hearing about the new success stories you are destined to write. Congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

Now we've been putting the spotlight on our new graduates today, and that's properly so. They've earned our respect and appreciation. But it's now time to turn the tables. I would like to ask all of the parents, grandparents, spouses, partners, and friends, if able, to stand so that we may recognize you. Graduates, please stand and say thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

And now I ask you to please continue to stand as I invite Mackenzie Wells to lead us in the singing of the first stanza of our Alma Mater, which can be found on the back of your program. Following the alma mater, please remain in place for the recessional of the faculty and the platform party. And I do hope you enjoy the rest of this beautiful evening.

[MUSIC - "ALMA MATER"]

(SINGING) From the beauty land Ohio comes a universal praise, 'tis the song of Alma Mater that her sons and daughters raise, 'tis a hail to Kent forever on the Cuyahoga shore, now we join the loving thousands as they sing it o'er and o'er.

Hail to thee, our Alma Mater, O, how beautiful thou art, high enthroned above the hilltops, ringing o'er every heart.

[MUSIC PLAYING]