

Good afternoon. We are pleased to have you join us at the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine commencement ceremony. Today, you will witness a ceremony rich in tradition, as we will recognize our doctoral graduates in a formal hooding ceremony. Please remain seated until the president's party enters.

As our academic procession begins, the university mace bearer leads the faculty to their seats. The mace is being carried by associate professor and faculty senate chairman, Pamela Grimm. The mace is a traditional ceremonial staff displayed as a symbol of authority. The mace being used was designed and crafted by alumnus Dr. Michael [? Jazick. ?]

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.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

The length of the robe, the width of the sleeves, borders, and the length of the hood increases 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 afternoon, recipients of a doctor of podiatric medicine degree are awarded hoods trimmed in dark green velvet, the silk linings of the hood in a chevron pattern of blue and gold, Kent State's colors.

Carrying the gonfalon today is Joshua Peter Manning, first in the class of 2019 graduates. Gonfalons are ceremonial flags or banners suspended from a crossbar. The use of ceremonial banners dates back to the 1500s. Italian towns, for example, each have a gonfalon, which is the official emblem of the town, showing its coat of arms.

Each of the college gonfalons are emblazoned with the Kent State seal on an academic color of one of the college's disciplines, established by academic protocol.

Now entering the ceremony hall are the degree candidates. Leading the degree candidates is chief faculty marshal, Dr. Rocco Petrozzi. Following the degree candidates are the special hooders.

Da da!

[LAUGHTER]

That's my daddy!

[LAUGHTER]

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise for the president's party. The president's party includes honored guests, the registrar, executive officers, university deans, advisory board members, trustees, and our president.

President Warren, I declare that all are assembled and in order for the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine commencement ceremony. I now ask Ms. Mackenzie Wells to lead us in singing the national anthem.

(SINGING) Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming? Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight o'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming? And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air gave proof through the night that our flag was still there. Oh, 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 Dean Allan M. Boike.

Thank you Ms. Wells. This is indeed an auspicious day, a great day. At this time, I would like to recognize the members of the stage party. Their names are listed in your program. Please hold your applause until I ask them to stand for your recognition. Members of the platform party include the university deans and faculty from the College of Podiatric Medicine, the university registrar, our announcer, first in the class, trustee Robert Frost, our speaker, Dr. John Visser.

Also with us this afternoon is our provost and Vice President Todd Diacon and President Beverly Warren. I would also like to recognize our musicians, our marshal, and our interpreters. Would all members of the platform party please rise so that we may express our appreciation?

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. Please be seated. Now I'd like to recognize our distinguished faculty members. The achievements of our graduates would not be possible without their knowledge, guidance, and collaboration. In celebration of the doctor of podiatric medicine degree awarded today, many of these distinguished individuals will hood the degree recipients. I ask all faculty members here to please rise and allow us to recognize you for your commitment.

[APPLAUSE]

Please be seated. I would now like to welcome Robert Frost, a member of the university's board of trustees to the podium.

Thank you and good afternoon. On behalf of the board of trustees of Kent State University, I am pleased to welcome you to the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine commencement ceremony. You are on the threshold of completing a great achievement, ready to step into your future, fully equipped with a Kent State doctoral degree in podiatric medicine. As you begin this next chapter in your lives, I hope you will make every effort to stay connected with 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 a part of your future. Now it is my honor to introduce the 12th president of Kent State University, Beverly Warren.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you, Trustee Frost. And good afternoon, everyone. This is a momentous occasion. We've been waiting years and years, if not a lifetime, for this moment to happen. And I'm so glad that I'm able to join you in this celebration. We are about to graduate 100 doctors of podiatric medicine.

[APPLAUSE]

And I am here to tell you, we are Kent State proud. The class of 2019 is a special group of high achieving medical students. Your ranks include 56 men and 44 women, five veterans, and 14 parents. You hail from 35 states and four nations.

We have a core value of valuing the diversity of beliefs, thoughts, identity, and culture. And I truly believe that this class of 2019 class of podiatric medicine students really exemplifies that. And you are a unique feature of what makes us so proud that we are together, Kent State University. We're richer for your presence. And we are so proud of your accomplishments.

Members of this class have shown talent that abounds among you. And I want to cite a few of those. We have as one of our graduates Chandler Ligas who was selected podiatric medical student of the year of the country's nine podiatric medical colleges.

[APPLAUSE]

And we have [? Sara ?] [? Gossett, ?] who was selected president of the American Podiatric Medical Student

Association, again, representing all nine medical colleges in the US.

[APPLAUSE]

And we have Brendan Rodgers, who won the quiz bowl competition among students from each of those nine colleges.

[APPLAUSE]

And I'm also pleased to note that 100% of those eligible in this class have been placed into a residency. Congratulations to each of you.

[APPLAUSE]

The university is now a part of your heritage. It's now yours to share. As the College of Podiatric Medicine and Kent State University, you are part of 246,000 alumni of Kent State University and more than 7,000 graduates of the College of Podiatric Medicine. As alumni, you will represent Kent State by your actions. And I know that you will use your unique gifts and talents to truly make a difference.

I know our outstanding faculty have provided you with guidance and mentoring and created an atmosphere of scholarship and discovery that I think you will carry with you into your individual lives. I know that you will allow their examples of professionalism to be your guide as you pursue a residency, select a specialty, and achieve your board certification. And I'm sure that the dedication of our faculty members has inspired you to provide compassionate care to the patients who will trust you, and that you will treat those who come to you with medical healing and dignity and respect, because we expect no less, and you expect no less of yourself.

I know you will always aim high and that you will be medical leaders, just as you have been leaders as students among the nine colleges of podiatric medicine. I know you'll be researchers and innovators for a lifetime. And I know you'll take on new challenges, because the only way that we grow is through lifelong learning. And most importantly, always remember to reach out your healing hands to those who need it the most.

College of Podiatric Medicine class of 2019, I offer you my warmest congratulations. And I wish you much happiness and success in your journey. It is now my privilege to introduce to you today's commencement speaker, Dr. John Visser. Dr. Visser is one of the profession's most dedicated and decorated physicians. A native of Hertzberg, Ohio, he spent his first two years of college studying at our Kent State Geauga and Trumbull campuses before transferring to Hiram College where he graduated magna cum laude.

He earned his doctor of podiatric medicine degree from what was then the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine and is now the proud College of Podiatric Medicine of Kent State University. Dr. Visser served his residency in podiatric medicine and surgery at Lindell Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri and has been in practice in St. Louis since 1981. He is a member of the faculty in the Department of Orthopedics at Wash U's School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Since 2012, he has served as director of residency training in podiatric surgery for SSM DePaul Health Center in St. Louis. He is a diplomat of the American Board of Podiatric Surgery and the American Board of Podiatrist Medicine. And he is a fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

Dr. Visser was awarded Podiatrist of the Year in 1995. And the Meritorious Service Award was given to him from the American Podiatric Medical Association in 1997. And in 2015, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame honor society at Kent State's College of Podiatric Medicine.

He is a prolific writer and certainly a contributor to the new knowledge in our field and is highly sought nationally and internationally for topics relating to podiatry. So you can see why we are so proud and so fortunate to have as our speaker today-- and I hope you will give him a warm Kent State welcome to Dr. John Visser.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you very much. Well, it's a real honor to be here. I'm looking at the sea of green here and remember when I graduated in 1978, 41 years ago from the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine. I would like to also introduce you as one of the 1 and 1/2% of the population that holds a doctoral degree. And you who'll be surgical specialists, 0.5% of the population. That is a real honor to all of you, and you should be extremely proud, as well as your family. And I salute you for that.

Secondly, a statistic that's very important. The population in 2018 was 235.2 million people, was the census in the United States. Practicing podiatrists, 15,000. That's what we have. And let me tell you, that's a discrepancy that is true. Our profession is on the uprise. We are overmanned-- or undermanned with the demand for our services. It just amazes me every day how much in demand we are.

I've been running a residency program for 34 years. And every one of my residents always got some form of a job. There are two things that I would really like to talk about. Number one is the fact that, yes, I graduated in 1978. When that happened, only 50% of graduating podiatrists from the five schools at that time got residency programs. The remaining 50% did basically preceptorships.

I chose Lindell Hospital, because it was one of the two programs that had two year programs. And I was fortunate to get a second year program, which meant only 10% of graduates before me two year programs at that time. I

did a third year, which was specially designed for me at that time. There are only two of us in the country that had performed them.

When I finished my residency, the only option I had was to go into private practice. There was no other option. We did not have orthopedic groups wanting podiatrists. We did not want-- they did not have medical specialty groups.

I was fortunate to go in with a person who was well trained and had been a residency director. But at that time, the only hospital in St. Louis that was open to podiatrists was Lindell Hospital. It was during the '80s when managed care came in that things really exploded in our profession. Because with the increased demand for patient care, decreased reimbursement, and the gatekeepers from the physicians, there was a demand from hospital administrators to add increasing revenue. And that's where we as podiatrists came into play.

And by the late '80s, early '90s, we were basically on all hospital staffs in the St. Louis area. It was also during that particular time that outpatient surgery centers became in vogue. And surgery centers were very, very interested in bringing podiatrists on, because we were lucrative for them. We could do orthopedic cases and turn them over very rapidly. And we were very financially stable.

The real problem we had as we had finished up the '80s and into the early '90s was the problem with basically hospital privileging. We had privileges to do forefoot procedures. But pretty much the hospitals restricted us. We couldn't really do much in the rear foot and no ankle privileges. However, the outpatient surgery centers were very lucrative. And they allowed whatever your training was to actually perform those procedures.

So there was a real need for an ankle law. And in 1991, I was appointed by Governor Ashcroft on the State Board of Podiatric Medicine. And the first thing that we tried to do was to make a change in the rules and regulations. We went and we defined the foot as a peritalar complex.

The very next state board meeting that I had, the president of Missouri Orthopedic Association showed up. And he said, boys, this is not going to fly. And so what we did at that point, I spent the next three years negotiating with the orthopedists about what our training was and what our scope of practice was.

And we also legislated the law. I testified in the House of Representatives. I testified in the Senate. And we were able to get the law passed in 1994.

One of the biggest obstacles that I ran into was the situation of our own profession. Our training was very broken up. We had PSR 12s at the time. We had PSR 24s. We had PORs which were orthopedic based programs, which were not surgical. And we had medical based programs. And we still had preceptorships out there.

So to try to get a standardized law was difficult. And we were able to work that out with the fact that if the student

finished two years of surgical training which was sponsored by the Council on Podiatric Medical Education, they were eligible to do ankle procedures. As well as the people who did not perform two years of training would get it by passing their boards in foot and ankle surgery.

In 2011, in our profession, standardization of residency training occurred. And this has changed the entire forefront of our profession. Our profession is basically on an equal foothold with all hospitals, at least in the St. Louis area. We are constantly consulted by every type of specialty, internists, hospitalists, neurologists, peripheral vascular people, cardiologists, endocrinologists, rheumatologists.

When I'm on call at a hospital where a resident is not available, I dread it. Because I know I'm going to have 9 to 15 consults. The demand for our services just absolutely skyrocketed. And I can tell you the state of our profession is absolutely mind boggling. And I would not worry one iota of what your future is.

Concerning residency training, I have been a director for 34 years. I graduated in 1981 from my residency. In '84, I was a residency director. Now, in those days, young people-- I was 32 years old-- took the sponsorship of residency training. Because prior to that, the older podiatrists were not surgically trained. And so we took it on the forefront. And we did not have the backing of industry at the time.

I remember the first Missouri Podiatric Medical Association meeting I went to we had one vendor in the lecture hall that was a Lamisil rep. Now at our last meeting in 2015, we had over 52 vendors. Industry has supported our profession tremendously. Orthopedic equipment companies, wound companies, all types of industry has thrown large amounts of finance and money toward residency training.

I run at least six cadaver labs every year in all different types of reconstructive techniques, external fixators, basically using all different types of internal fixation devices and Charcot types of reconstructions. This is all available now that we never had when I first began training residents.

So I'm going to say this to you. You are in an ideal situation. I would never take back my experience from where I was to where I have gone today. It was a hard road, but it was rewarding. But I'm glad to see that we've passed that ground for you so you can move on.

I'd like to make-- to end this talk with a little statement that my residency director used a couple of times. And it really meant a lot to me. It dealt with Alexander the Great. As you know, he ruled as King of Macedonia from 336 B.C. to 323 B.C. In 13 years, he conquered the ancient world from the Balkans to the India Kush. And his statement was this, and when Alexander saw the breath of his domain, he wept, for there were no more worlds to conquer. The benefits of a classical education.

And that's what you've accomplished here in your first step. Your second step will be residency training for three years. Some of you do fellowships. And then you will go on to practice. I am here to tell you your future is very bright. You have made the right decision. And I welcome you to our profession. And I congratulate each one of you. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

Dr. Visser, thank you for joining us today. I think you can see that you stand on the shoulders of giants in your profession. And he happens to be one of us. So thank you on behalf of all of us for being here with us today.

[APPLAUSE]

At this time, Dean Allan Boike will come forward and present the candidates for their degrees.

[APPLAUSE]

Will the candidates for the doctor of podiatric medicine degree please rise and remain standing.

[APPLAUSE]

President Warren, I proudly present the candidates for the doctor of podiatric medicine degree.

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 doctor of podiatric medicine degree with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto. Congratulations.

[APPLAUSE]

Now I'll ask you to please be seated. And then we'll ask the marshal to bring the graduates forward to receive their hooding and their diplomas.

[MUSIC - WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, "EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK"]

We now welcome the recipients of the doctor of podiatric medicine from the Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine. It's my great honor to be able to read their names. And I can honestly say, I'm going to miss you guys.

[LAUGHTER]

[READING NAMES]

Congratulations to the recipients of the doctor of podiatric medicine degree.

[APPLAUSE]

President Warren, it is my privilege to present the 2019 graduating class of Kent State University's College of Podiatric Medicine. At this time, I would like all graduates to stand and join me for the recital of the podiatric physicians' oath.

I do solemnly swear on my honor to those who have taught me and by all things that I hold sacred that as a practitioner of podiatric medicine I shall abide by the following precepts. I shall above all hold paramount the welfare of my patients regardless of fee or favor, and I shall neither prescribe nor give any treatment or drug that will be detrimental to his well-being.

I shall endeavor to uphold the dignity of the professional way of life and the aims for which we rendered to public service. I shall cherish those who have taught me, holding high their principles and precepts. And I pledge that I shall do everything that I am able to do to promote and to protect the profession of podiatric medicine and to aid my fellow practitioners.

In swearing this oath, I hereby dedicate myself in service to the health of humanity, and I hold my goal the relief of pain and suffering. If I keep this oath, may I receive guidance in the practice of my art and may I enjoy my life and the respect of all individuals.

You may be seated.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you. And we are coming close to the end of this memorable ceremony. As you leave us, I want to leave you with the very best wishes from your alma mater, Kent State University. I hope that you will keep in touch as you pursue the next legs of your journey. And always know you will be welcomed home to Kent State University anytime.

We know that you're going to use your Kent State University degree to make a difference in this world. And it's a world that is very hungry for your superb talents, your caring and compassionate work. And I know that you are

going to make a difference in the communities you serve. And it's indeed good to know, very good to know, that when we need a doctor of podiatric medicine in this part of the world, chances are the odds are excellent that we can turn to a superb Kent State University Graduate.

[APPLAUSE]

Before we go today, I would like to take this moment to recognize someone very special to Kent State University and to the College of Podiatric Medicine family. This individual is one of the recipients of the 2019 President's Award of Distinction. The President's Award of Distinction is a recognition program to reward staff members who have demonstrated outstanding achievements, service, leadership, and dedication to Kent State in advancing the university's strategic priorities and our core values.

Today's recipient is known for going above and beyond the call of duty. She's been described as the consummate professional, and wears a smile that can bring out the sun even on the cloudiest of northeast Ohio days. She's been the driving force in recruiting strong applicants to the College of Podiatric Medicine. And she has been called the rock for our students.

She is dedicated to Kent State, committed to our students first priority, and makes the College of Podiatric Medicine a better place. It is with honor and sincere appreciation that I present this award to Kent State's own student first champion, Ms. [? Carla ?] [? Ranabam. ?]

[APPLAUSE]

[? Carla, ?] would you please come forward and join me?

Thank you so much.

So please come here.

Yes.

So this award not only has a wonderful letter from me, but it also carries a \$1,500 check in our appreciation for being a distinguished award for this recipient. I congratulate you.

Thank you so, so much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thank you.

And now I ask you to stand. And I invite Ms. Mackenzie Wells to lead us in the singing of the first stanza of our alma mater. You can find it on the back of your program. And then following the alma mater, if you would please remain in your places for the recessional of the graduates, the faculty, and the platform party. Thank you, everyone. Enjoy the rest of this wonderful day.

[APPLAUSE]

From the beauty land Ohio comes the 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. Oh, how beautiful thou art. High enthroned above the hilltop, reigning over every heart.

[APPLAUSE]

[BAGPIPE PLAYING]

[CHEERS]