

Thank you, President Moscato, Dean Kelly.
Hello, Class of 2012!

Congratulations on your achievements. Thank you for asking me to be a part of this ceremony to honor your graduation.

Now let me thank all your proud parents, family, faculty, friends who helped get you to this great day. Let's give them a big round of applause.

Now, the formalities are over... Let me say this...

The great British actor, Sir Lawrence Olivier was once asked by a rather pompous BBC interviewer what it took to become a great actor - Was it learning lines, understanding the character, working with directors, fellow actors, and playwrights?

"Is that all acting really is, Sir Lawrence," he asked.

Olivier paused and said, "Oh, no, no, dear boy, it's all about energy. Nothing else is involved. Energy, Energy, Energy. Otherwise you might as well just go home and watch the telly!"

Think about that. Energy!

What do Beyonce, J. Lo, P. Diddy, Coco Chanel, Chef Gordon Ramsey, Italian filmmaker Fellini, Britain's graphic

designer Jonathan Barnbrook, and Portland's own agency whiz - Dan Wieden - all have in common?

Energy! They all have it in spades.

They also have passion, perseverance, drive, and the ability to get up and go again even when they've failed.

I've faced all of that in my creative endeavors. I can't count the number of failures I've chalked up over the years. When my creativity wasn't paying off, I became a house painter to make ends meet in New York City - painted Meryl Streep's apt. - discussed paint products with Henry Kissinger - even plastered over George Soros' clock. (FORGIVE ME, GEORGE!)

Yet, here I am being asked to inspire you to do the same. Keep focused. Stay driven. And remain hopeful.

Why, you may ask, am I here on this stage? Was it for the years I spent in the heart of Belfast, making a documentary on the War in Ireland? Is for the 167 national interior design magazine covers I've photographed? Or is it for turning my filmmaking skills toward today's hip technology and the million YouTube hits for "The Heaviest Load," a 1976 classic road trip or the hit six part YouTube series - "Pack Your Kit," featuring Six pro photographers?

No, it's all because of...

Well, I'll tell you.

My Mum and Dad ran a pub in Blackburn, Lancashire, England - a town never known as a sought-after vacation spot. It's cold, damp, dark, and as the Beatle's said, "There are 10,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire." And according to the British hymn "Jerusalem," it also possesses "Satanic mills."

Gazing down from the hill above Blackburn, you couldn't see the town, because it was obscured by the black coal dust from the mines and mills.

On Saturday, my mother would go shopping, past streets littered with pubs, where miners with coal dust faces drank on their only day off. The one bright spot was the local record shop, where I spied Frank Sinatra's colorful album, "Come Fly with Me."

"What's that blue behind him," I asked my mother. "That's blue sky," she said. "Why don't we have one here?" I asked. "We do, it's just hidden!"

That's when I decided to get the hell out of Blackburn and find that blue sky.

I thank those mine & millworkers today for propelling me to seek my future.

I've worked as a photographer, director, film producer, documentary filmmaker, and ad

agency exec - in London, South Africa,
Wales, New York, L.A., San Francisco, and
for the past 18 years - Portland, Oregon.

That's right. I co-own a boutique ad agency,
which I named after one of the loneliest
spots in England - Blackstone Edge - located
at the bleak, windy crest of the Pennine
chain, where Roman legions marched northward
to Scotland in the hopes of defeating the
Scots, which they never did. I used to
imagine all that history while gazing out
the window of my mother's pub in Blackburn,
where we could see the stark Pennines.

"Across bleak Blackstone Edge rolls the
puff, puff, puff of the train,

Wave, wave, wave to the driver to the edge
of the Pennine chain.

Follow the Gypsy children to the snug, snug,
snug caravan,

Watch bracelet rings under hissing lamps
tell of fortunes that are but chance."

Today, you graduates are headed out into the
world, too, wondering if your fortunes are
but chance? Yes, you've achieved wonderful
degrees in creative fields, but you're
facing a world in economic turmoil that is
also experiencing the greatest burgeoning of
technology in history. And you're probably
asking yourself... What to do? What to do?

There is no question that your greatest challenges lay ahead.

I was in a similar dilemma when I escaped the North of England on a train to London at just 17 years of age. Unlike you, I had little or no training, but I did what all of you should do as well. Find a mentor, seek the best in your chosen field, take an apprenticeship, or whatever job you can get to learn your craft hands-on from someone whose work you admire, and whose footsteps you want to follow in.

I admired Cornell Lucas - one of the leading British photographers of his day - and his work so much that I knocked on his door three times before I got to meet him. When he heard how many times I'd darkened his doorstep, he gave me a job just to stop me from coming a fourth time.

CYGNET FILMS

I say always grab an opportunity no matter how small it may seem at the time!

It can be the opening of a door to something great!

Later, when I was working at Cygnet Films and the boss gave me the key to the studio, because I was supposed to feed the boss's pet hamster after hours. Once the little chap was fed, I went around practicing on every piece of filmmaking equipment in the studio - the editing gear, the camera

equipment, projectors, sound equipment - because I wanted to be ready.

I got my chance the night a big-time director who decided he wanted to try to edit his own film got into big trouble. He'd hit the wrong button and spooled his entire film out onto the floor. He saw me next to the hamster cage and called out: "Help me! I can't stop the machine!" Thanks to my self-training, I was able to stop the machine and spool all the wayward film neatly back into its proper cans. The next day I was promoted to assistant editor and ultimately, the managing director for Cygnet in New York.

Women, I must admit that careers in photography and Hollywood filmmaking have long been dominated by men. No wonder, given all the "Good Ole Boys" out there who were such "gearheads." But with the advent of digital technology in these fields especially, the glass ceiling is getting thin in places. And many women have already started to demolish it. Don't hesitate to get on board and break it down along with them - it's been a long time in coming.

Blimey! When an obscure Icelandic singer named Bjork becomes one of the most innovative performers in the past 10 years, you know there are changes afoot!

And don't forget Condoleezza Rice who just broke another barrier by being one of two women to be admitted as members to the all-

male bastion - the Augusta National Golf Club, which has excluded women for 80 years.

So, graduates one and all...

If there is one thing that I can impart to you today, it's learning the art of persistence. As creative people, you are by nature, a sensitive lot. Putting your art out there means putting your own self, and the very heart and soul of your being on the chopping block. Developing a thick skin is probably the most difficult yet most imperative thing you must do to survive in the creative world and then pair it with dogged persistence. And hope.

When you're young, hope comes easily. Keep refreshing it as you come up against difficulties. Don't accept that something can't get done. Learn from those who have tried, failed and been successful. Surround yourself with people who want the same as you do and who do not give up until they've achieve it.

Again, think, "Energy!"

My passion for new horizons, and seeking those blue skies brought me as a young man on a cheap, ten pound flight to South Africa. There, I took on a number of exciting jobs, working in advertising, still photography, and stoking my fledgling interests in filmmaking.

I assisted a wildlife photographer, worked on the Whitbread Beer, Mobile Oil and the "BP Bob" filmstrip and longed to get into the British Film Industry.

Three years later, I was back in England, starting all over again, beginning my filmmaking career as a "Tea Boy," for the likes of Lindsey Anderson, John Schlesinger, and Academy Award-Winning cinematographer Dougie Slocumb. They all said that I made a "smashing" cup of tea and they enjoyed the extra "bikkies" I gave them.

I learned something important about filmmaking from all of those men and from a great female editor, Marlene Fletcher, chief editor at the BBC, because I wasn't afraid to backtrack and start again in order to feed my passion with knowledge from people whose work I admired.

So, use every fiber of your talent to soak up knowledge, know-how, expertise, and survival techniques from your next adventure. Every piece is part of the whole, along with a big dose of "Energy!"

OK. One last thing.

"Uhhhh... Mummy, Daddy. There's one more thing I need to do... TRAVEL!

"I need to see the Sistine Chapel, sit on the Champs Elysee, have a pint of bitter in a London pub, cheer on Manchester United, see Gaudi's Cathedral in Barcelona, sit on a

sandy beach in Rio de Janiero, go to Johannesburg, travel to Singapore, see other cultures, absorb it all... because that's what will make me a finer artist and better person able to navigate the complex world market."

But, wherever you are come November 4th...
DON'T FORGET TO VOTE - WITH ENERGY!!!