

Ohio  
Wesleyan  
University

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**PRESIDENT ROCK JONES' 2012 COMMENCEMENT REMARKS**

**Sunday, May 13, 2012**

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## 2012 COMMENCEMENT REMARKS

**Rock Jones, Ph.D., President of Ohio Wesleyan University**  
**May 13, 2012**

Members of the class of 2012, trustees, faculty and staff, family and friends of our graduates, welcome to the glorious occasion of the 168th Commencement exercises at Ohio Wesleyan University.

Four years ago, this class arrived on this campus with what, at the time, must have seemed such a long journey ahead of you. And here you are, the journey complete, standing on the threshold of your place in the world. The parents of one of you recently sent me a photo taken as you sat together in Gray Chapel on the day of your arrival at OWU nearly four years ago. Katie Jenks wrote this note to her parents, "I am so going to thrive in this place. I'm so glad I picked OWU." Today I hope each one of you feels that way about your choice of OWU and about your four years on this campus.

Over these four years, you have left your mark on this campus. With your leadership we have seen the advent of the Healthy Bishop Initiative, the development of the Bishop Games, the rebirth of the Ohio Wesleyan Debate Association, tremendous growth in intramural programs, significant increase in student leadership in FitOWU and the development of Student Fit, and the return of Phi Gamma Delta. You welcomed renovations to three houses on Williams Drive that brought new groups of students to live on the hill. You helped envision and inaugurate the Bigelow-Reed House, and you expanded the vision of the International House to become the Citizens of the World, or COW, House. You helped give birth to Day on the JAY. You lit up Selby Stadium for the first night football game in OWU's history. You brought President's Club back to life. You won a national championship.

You earned numerous academic awards on campus and at disciplinary conferences across the country. You conducted ground-breaking research and wrote thoughtful papers you did not know you could write. You challenged yourself to study disciplines you did not know would be of such interest. You took risks and dared to look at challenging questions from new perspectives. You embraced the new opportunities of the TiPiTgrant program and produced amazing proposals for research, travel, and cross-cultural experiences. Your commitment to community service helped Ohio Wesleyan receive the President's Award for General Community Service. Your passion for global affairs helped Ohio Wesleyan to be selected by the Institute for International Education for participation in the International Academic Partnership Program in India.

Your time at OWU was a time of enormous challenge, opportunity and transformation. You witnessed historic elections in the United States and around the world. Your time here was marked by the greatest economic challenge our world has faced since the Great Depression. You saw the growing impact of technology reflected in election cycles, in the Arab spring, and in your own ability to access information for your academic work and to maintain relationships with individuals virtually anywhere on the planet. Your interest in the affairs of the world and your ability to understand the complexities and ambiguities

of events near and far were enhanced by your experience in the OWU classroom and by opportunities to connect theory to practice in central Ohio and in the far corners of the world.

You learned much during these four years. Here at OWU you learned to understand what is known as well as to pursue the frontiers of knowledge in search of that which is not yet discovered. Here at OWU you learned to pursue the questions that have not yet been asked and to live with the questions for which there are no answers. Here at OWU you learned to examine complex problems from the perspective of multiple disciplines of knowledge toward the aim of developing lasting solutions. Here at OWU you saw in yourself and in those around you the enormous potential that is unleashed when individuals find and pursue their passion. Here at OWU you learned to care deeply—to care deeply for those closest to you and for those you may never know but whose lives are impacted by the way you live and the choices you make; to care deeply for the structures of our free society that allow us to fulfill our individual and collective potential; to care deeply for the diversity that makes life rich and beautiful; to care deeply about the choices you make, the values you cherish, the dreams you pursue, the relationships you nourish, and the lives you lead. Here at OWU you have learned so much, in the classroom, on the stage, on the playing field, in the library, in the laboratory, on the JAYwalk, in the Cave, on the Hill, and around the world.

Now today, you come to this milestone, where the faculty of this University have determined that you have completed the work and have learned the lessons that merit the awarding of a Baccalaureate degree. This degree is the mark of an educated person. It is the mark of a person who has the knowledge and capacities necessary for leadership. It is the mark of an educated citizen, a person who understands the responsibilities shared in a civil society. It is the mark of a person who is not imprisoned by the past but is open to the possibility of the future. It is a mark of both privilege and responsibility—the privilege of knowing, and the responsibility of putting that knowledge to good use.

To parents and family members we extend our gratitude for your support these four years and on this special day. Without your support none of us would be here today. We share your pride, and we feel your joy.

To the class of 2012, you will always be special to me. We arrived at OWU together. Over these four years you have grown and matured in ways you likely did not imagine when your journey here began. Each one of you makes us proud. We can only imagine what the future holds. But we know you will continue to do amazing things, and we are confident that you will continue to have enormous impact, wherever you go. We salute you on your accomplishment, and we look forward to all that lies ahead.

Congratulations on this, your special day.