

## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

By

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President Vaughn

Members of the Board of Trustees

Faculty, Staff and Students

Members of the graduating class of 2011

Parents, Family and Friends

Distinguished Guests

I cannot begin to tell you all what an honor it is to be here and I humbly thank you, President Vaughn for inviting me to deliver the 130<sup>th</sup> Commencement Address for this truly amazing University. And it is even more special to me, as 30 years ago almost to the very day, I donned a cap and gown and graduated on the lawn of Plant Park. The four years I spent here were among the happiest of my life and I have carried these fond memories with me throughout my adult life. I am awestruck at the growth of the university since my graduation and I thank everyone for the hospitality you have shown me.

When I got the invitation to speak to you, I was thrilled. I couldn't wait to get home and share the news with my husband and children. I pulled into the driveway, burst through the back door, and found Claire and Ryan, my two youngest children in middle school doing their homework on the kitchen table. I enthusiastically announced my good fortune, and instead of the "WOW, THAT'S AWESOME MOM" or something to that effect as I was expecting, the dialog went something like this:

"Hey kids, I have the best news. I've been asked to give the graduation speech at my alma mater, UT." No responses. Scarlet, our golden retriever seemed genuinely jubilant about my news, so I thought perhaps they were so engrossed in their studies that they didn't hear me. I repeated my announcement. Nothing again....So I asked, "Aren't you excited for me?" And that's when Ryan said, "Well yeah, but you're not famous mom." Claire's response followed:





In closing, I want to again sincerely thank all of you for this opportunity today. I congratulate each and every one of you on your academic achievement and wish you every success in your future endeavors. And I leave you with one last thought.

**Call your mothers. Often!**