

GRADUATION SPEECH

HOW BIG IS YOUR DREAM?

By Dawn Grell

UVI St. Thomas Campus – Class of 2006

Today celebrates the culmination of years of hard work, self discipline, perseverance and sacrifices made by us the graduates and our families. As the first ever nursing graduate to be designated Class Speaker during commencement at the University of the Virgin Islands, I am greatly honored to be here tonight to speak on behalf of the DYNAMIC, DIVERSE AND PHENOMENAL CLASS OF 2006.

To those who have taught, guided, inspired, supported, and encouraged the CLASS OF 2006, on behalf of the class, I say thank you. To the DYNAMIC, DIVERSE AND PHENOMENAL CLASS OF 2006, your hard work has paid off and we now possess the skills and experiences which shape and define us and which cannot be taken away from us.

We are ready for the next step towards our future goals and dreams. Now we are moving on toward new horizons, some known and some yet unknown. We have been prepared and readied for that next step.

I would like to share a poem with you entitled “Dreams” by Langston Hughes:

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

The University of the Virgin Islands made us part of an elite team. We have been given an opportunity to positively impact our communities because of the knowledge and experiences we now have. Our professors have taught us to think and to act appropriately and confidently. They have encouraged us to be leaders in our own disciplines.

HOW HIGH DO YOU PLAN TO CLIMB? HOW DEEP DO YOU PLAN TO EXPLORE? HOW FAR DO YOU PLAN TO TRAVEL? HOW BIG IS YOUR DREAM?

We must not allow the negative influences and circumstances in our lives *to* prevent us from achieving our dreams and aspirations. **AGAIN I ASK, HOW BIG IS YOUR DREAM?**

As we move forward, it is vital that we give back to our community since we have been given so much and so generously. I challenge you tonight, the DYNAMIC, DIVERSE AND PHENOMENAL CLASS OF 2006, to the mantle to become leaders in your communities.

IT IS NOT ABOUT ME! IT IS NOT ABOUT YOU! IT IS ABOUT THE WORK THAT WE DO! HOW BIG IS YOUR DREAM?

Whoever you are and whatever degree you will now hold, remember you have a unique voice that no other in this world has. Your voice is important, and it needs to be heard. My fellow graduates, this is the time for bold measures and you occupy the right moment and place to use them.

Oliver Wendell once said, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us". We have so much for which we should be proud. The future belongs to those *who* believe in the beauty of their dreams (Eleanor Roosevelt).

HOW BIG IS YOUR DREAM?

You may be from countries which are tiny dots in the middle of the ocean, but with hard work and determination to manifest your dreams, you have the power and duty to alter the world in needed and profound ways.

THE DYNAMIC, DIVERSE, PHENOMENAL CLASS OF 2006 PLEASE STAND WITH ME. Whatever you dream you can do -- begin to do it.

"Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it (Goethe).

TONIGHT, LET US DECLARE AND VOW TO make those big dreams come true.