Toastmasters International Lists 5 Memorable Commencement Speeches in the Last 5 Years

Celebrities, presidents and activists are among those whose words have inspired graduates

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., May 15, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- With commencement season now in full swing, many politicians, executives and other prominent figures will serve as commencement speakers. The most effective and memorable speeches are light-hearted and engage and inspire the audience of graduates and their guests.

Toastmasters International, which has helped millions of men and women learn to speak with confidence and poise in front of audiences, highlights five speeches below (in chronological order) as among the most memorable commencement speeches in the past five years.

- While speaking at Maharishi University of Management in 2014, actor **Jim Carrey** urged the graduating class to not let a fear of the unknown cause them to settle. "So many of us choose our path out of fear disguised as practicality. What we really want seems impossibly out of reach and ridiculous to expect, so we never dare to ask the universe for it." http://y2u.be/V80-gPkpH6M
- **Former President George W. Bush** used his well-known sense of humor to his advantage when delivering Southern Methodist University's keynote speech in 2015. The 43rd president of the United States received laughter and applause throughout his speech, none more so than when he delivered this line, "Those of you who are graduating this afternoon with high honors, awards and distinctions, I say well done. And as I like to tell the C students, you too can be president." http://y2u.be/Jlu1qvu6Vhg
- When speaking to the University of Redlands graduating class of 2016, scientist and animal-rights activist **Jane Goodall** reminded the students of the impact their behavior has on the rest of the world. "We may have different colored skin, we may be from different cultures, we may eat different things and wear different clothes, but wherever you go in the world: If you cry, your tears are the same. If you're happy, you laugh, and the laughter around the world is the same. … Within each one of us all around the world, the human heart is structured the same." https://tinyurl.com/y6mjck7r
- Actor **Will Ferrell**'s speech at the University of Southern California in 2017 might best be remembered for his impromptu performance of Whitney Houston's classic *I Will Always Love You*, but he also offered some words of wisdom to the students who are unsure of what to do after graduation. "For many of you who maybe don't have it figured out, it's OK. That's the same chair I sat in. Enjoy the process of your search without succumbing to the pressure of the result. Trust your gut, keep throwing darts at the dartboard, don't listen to the critics, and you will figure it out." http://y2u.be/mfjGmBVAL-o
- When Apple CEO **Tim Cook** gave the commencement speech at Duke University in 2018, he challenged the graduating class to break with conventional wisdom. "Don't just accept the world you inherit today. Don't just accept the status quo. No big challenge has ever been solved, and no lasting improvement has ever been achieved, unless people dare to try something different, dare to think different." http://y2u.be/Jr4LC1q1N_g

To schedule an interview with a Toastmasters leader about how to deliver a memorable speech, or why these commencement speeches stand out, email pr@toastmasters.org.

About Toastmasters International
Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Englewood, Colo., United States, the organization's membership exceeds 357,000 in more than 16,600 clubs in 143 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow @Toastmasters on Twitter.

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