



## 2008 Scholars Day Ceremony

Wednesday, April 2, 2008

Jorgensen Auditorium, University of Connecticut

Remarks by President Michael J. Hogan

I'm so delighted to be part of today's Scholars Day ceremony. It's very inspiring to me personally, and as the University's president, to see our top students honored with such dignity and respect. This is what the University of Connecticut is all about – academic and personal excellence. I want to congratulate all of you, on your good work and your dedication to the academic life.

Abigail Adams — who was, as you probably know, the wife of one of this country's earliest presidents and mother of another, and above all an early champion of equality in education — once wrote that “learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.” I think there's a lot of wisdom in that statement. I also think it's particularly relevant to all of you.

As some of our top-achieving students, you've already proven that you not only have the willingness but also the “ardor” and “diligence” to “seek after learning.” You've proven it through impressive grade point averages, scholarly and creative projects, and leadership. You're all making a positive impact on the University community, and I want to thank you for the energy and ingenuity you've contributed to that community. I know that my faculty colleagues, the Honors Program staff, and many others share my feeling, and join me in encouraging you to keep on doing what you're doing!

I also want to thank the Honors Program and the faculty members here today for the work you've done in mentoring these students and fostering their extraordinary qualities. You're a remarkable testimony to the quality of the undergraduate teaching that happens on this campus. “Ardor and . . . diligence” can hardly be sustained without the kind of encouragement, direction, and wisdom that you impart to these students daily, and I know that they join me in thanking you for everything you've done for them.

Those of you who are family and friends also deserve hearty congratulations, because we all recognize the extent to which your enthusiasm — and your willingness to uphold a value system that holds active learning in the highest regard — have enabled and enriched these students' efforts.

Even more important than applauding you all for your accomplishments and hard work, though, is the opportunity I have right now: to encourage each and every one of you students to think hard about how you learn, how you want to learn in the future, and how you can do even more for yourselves and for your community.

I know that you're all enthusiastic learners, and that you have ambitious goals. Whatever they may be — and I wish you the best of luck as you move toward them — I would like to urge you to apply your “ardor and . . . diligence” throughout your academic and future careers to what I'll call “perpetual learning.”

Today's academic jargon calls it 'life-long learning.' But it's more than just learning – it's nurturing your natural curiosity, compelling you to seek out new ideas, new concepts, new ways of thinking. Curiosity is the only real motivation for learning, because it comes from within. Curiosity is the fire of perpetual learning, and the key to living a fully satisfying life, whether as a student, a graduate, a teacher, a professional, a parent, a worker, a college president, and yes, even a retiree.

I said a minute ago that I agreed with Abigail Adams, that “learning is not obtained by chance.” I do think, though, that chance affords each of us opportunities every day to advance our understanding and our accomplishments, if only we will recognize and pursue those opportunities with a genuine enthusiasm and assiduousness. You have exactly the talents and gifts that will allow you to build on the exciting things you have already begun as undergraduates at the University of Connecticut, and I look forward to watching you do so.