

Penn President Amy Gutmann's Baccalaureate Remarks given in Irvine Auditorium on Sunday, May 19, 2019.

Baccalaureate Welcome: A Class for the Ages

Friends, families, parents of our amazing graduates: Welcome to Penn's Baccalaureate Ceremony. A special welcome, a special thank you, and a special final greeting to the Class of 2019! You have challenged us; you have enlightened us; you have never failed to impress, to amaze, and to delight us. You are a class for the ages and will be long remembered here.

Tomorrow's commencement on Franklin Field will be loudly joyous, full of color and sound and spectacle. This event is quieter. It is more reflective. But I think you will find it is every bit as meaningful. Our honored speaker is a renowned and revered humanitarian, a man known reverentially as "Dr. Miracle" in the nation of his birth, the winner of the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.

Denis Mukwege is a physician and a saver of lives. He is a healer and a mender of broken spirits. He is a champion in the cause of justice, and a protector of the most vulnerable among us. Dr. Mukwege is a counselor in the cause of peace.

This ceremony is the perfect setting to listen and reflect on the words he has to offer. Baccalaureate is an ancient custom, linking us with centuries of university graduates, stretching all the way back to Medieval Oxford. As the times change, so too do our traditions. Originally, baccalaureate ceremonies were delivered in Latin, and the focus was on the style and elegance of delivery as much as the meaning of the words being delivered.

Today, the requirement that lofty and serious occasions be memorialized in Latin no longer pertains.

Rather, our time together this afternoon is meant to underscore the value of friendships formed, the importance of family who made your success possible, and this caring community that will continue to be a cherished part of your lives. This is a fitting capstone to your experiences at Penn.

The remarkable Class of 2019 has learned and grown and advanced

in so many ways in the past four years.

You boast among your class Fulbright and Rhodes Scholars, Truman and Luce Scholarship recipients, and an impressive list of other notable honors too lengthy to recite here. As well, there are six winners of the President's Engagement Prize and three President's Innovation Prize winners.

They are your classmates, your peers, your friends. Over the next year, they will work with purpose and passion doing great things.

From advancing literacy in Liberia to providing emergency housing for LGBTQ youth here on the streets of Philadelphia; improving health among agricultural workers in Chester County to creating efficient new ways to saving energy and saving our planet in our homes and offices; to fighting world hunger by reducing crop spoilage—these are projects that reflect the incredible inventiveness, daring, insight and care your classmates bring to the world.

By any measure, the Class of 2019 is already proving itself to be a potent force for good in the world. Here today, we share our thanks for everything you mean to achieve in the years ahead. You have great dreams; you are greatly prepared to fulfill them.

We wish you every joy along the way, remembering this: today and forever more, you have a home and family here at Penn.

Congratulations and enjoy.



Photograph by Lisa Godfrey

Amy Gutmann

Baccalaureate Address given in Irvine Auditorium on Sunday, May 19, 2019 by Denis Mukwege, Nobel Peace Prize co-Laureate 2018 and recipient of the 2016 Penn Nursing Renfield Foundation Award for Global Women's Health.

Strive to be Better

President Gutmann, Chaplain Howard, inspiring musicians and dancers, parents and members of the University of Pennsylvania Class of 2019, Friends.

I am honored to stand before you and extremely pleased to participate in this service. I myself was raised in the Christian tradition and am an ordained Christian pastor. I appreciate the beautiful wisdom many of you already have shared with us through music, dance and remarks coming from various traditions. We are all one in this amazing, beautiful, troubled world that you now step into beyond your university days.

What comes next? This is something on the minds of nearly all of you, I am certain. I suspect some of you already have chosen your path. I know, of course, that some of you have not.

Here is that part of my story: My father was a Christian pastor. As part of his work, he visited the sick. One day, when I was a very young boy, I went with him to visit a very sick little boy. My father leaned over the boy saying prayers. I was there, next to my father, my head lowered, eyes closed. I was disturbed by the groans of the boy. I felt his suffering. I wondered if he would be cured.

After we left the boy's home, I went to my father and asked him why, in addition to praying, he also didn't give the boy medicine. After all, whenever I was sick, my father both said prayers for me and gave me medicine. Why not the same for him? My father stopped and turned to me. He said: "I do what I can and what I know how to do: I pray. It is for others to give medicine, they are trained for that, that is their job."

I remembered that I had seen such people in local clinics, wearing their white coats, handing out medicine. I had heard that they were called *muganga*, Swahili for "doctor."

"OK," I immediately announced to my father. "I am going to be a doctor."

And that was that. After studies in Burundi and France, I did indeed become a doctor.

I suspect that some of you have had a similar experience. Something happened to you at some point in your life and you realized something

about yourself. I wish you good fortune as you pursue your calling, just as I have pursued mine, now for 40 years.

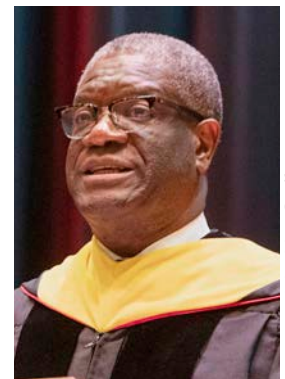
I also realize that many others of you have not yet decided what you will pursue professionally. Here is my advice: don't worry! I know many people who left university without any clear idea of what they would pursue professionally. They, too, found their calling and went forward.

Whatever you choose to do, though, allow me to make a general point. Jesus teaches that you should love your neighbor as yourself. But what does that mean? Can I ever love my neighbor as I love myself? In all honesty, I think the answer is no. But I think that that actually is the point Jesus is making. Jesus is giving us an ideal that we can never reach.

I believe that we all are imperfect humans. We should always strive to be better. Will we ever be perfect? Of course not. That does not mean we stop trying. I believe that Jesus is telling us that we should never stop trying to be better, that we always should work to love our neighbor more and then more.

That also means that we need to be open to what life brings to us. I told you I decided to be a doctor when I was a little boy. That is true. I wanted to be a doctor who delivered healthy babies. I wanted to work to reduce the high maternal mortality that still exists in too many countries today, including my own country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Let me now tell you something about my country. It should be one of the richest countries on the planet. We are blessed with an abundance of natural resources—gold, coltan, diamonds, copper, cobalt, many other valuable, rare minerals. Yet the people of my country are among the poorest in the world.



Photograph by Lisa Godfrey

Denis Mukwege

(continued on next page)

Baccalaureate Address by Denis Mukwege (continued from previous page)

The troubling reality is that the abundance of our natural resources is a root cause of war, extreme violence and our abject poverty.

Most of us in the world enjoy nice cars, jewelry, and high-tech tools and toys. I have a smartphone myself. Many of these items contain minerals found in my country. These minerals often are mined by young children. These children often are victims of intimidation and sexual violence.

When you drive an electric car, when you use your iPhone, when you put on a diamond ring, please take a minute to reflect on the human cost of manufacturing these objects. As consumers, we must insist that these products be manufactured with respect for human dignity.

If you turn a blind eye to this tragedy, you are being complicit. I believe it is not just perpetrators of violence who are responsible for their crimes, it is also those of us who choose to look the other way. I say “choose,” because, yes, *not* looking also is a choice.

My country still is being looted with the complicity of our leaders. It is being looted to increase their power, their wealth and their glory—at the expense of millions of innocent men, women, and children who are exploited in their continuing, extreme misery and poverty.

For 20 years now, day after day, at Panzi Hospital, I have seen the harrowing consequences of the country’s gross mismanagement. What have I done?

More than 20 years ago, those of us living in eastern Congo were faced with multiple wars and an epidemic of extreme sexual violence. To my great surprise and horror, my world collapsed as these wars began in the late 1990s. I became a doctor to help women give birth to healthy babies. I did not become a doctor to respond to an epidemic of rape with extreme violence. But what could I do? My training, my morals, the ethics of my profession demanded that I use my surgical skills to treat as best as I could the girls, women, and—I am very sad to say, even infants—who are sexually abused and who still come regularly to my hospital, Panzi, in Bukavu.

Since Panzi opened 20 years ago, we have treated more than 50,000 babies, girls, and women who have been sexually abused. That has become my life’s work. It was not my choice. But when it came, I knew what I needed to do. I had to do my job, just as my father had taught me when I was a small child: “There are those who heal, they are trained for that, it is their job.” That is what I do. I am a *muganga*.

So, what can others do? What can you do? First, it is incumbent upon all of us to choose to act. Taking action is a positive choice. It is a choice:

- whether or not we stop violence against women,
- whether or not we create a positive masculinity that promotes gender equality, in times of peace and in times of war.

It is a choice:

- whether or not to support a woman,
- whether or not to protect her,
- whether or not to defend her rights,
- whether or not to fight on her side in countries ravaged by conflict.

It is a choice: whether or not to build peace in countries in conflict.

I believe that doing the right thing is not hard. It is a matter of political will. It is a matter of seeing others as we see ourself. We must acknowledge the suffering of the survivors of all acts of violence against women in armed conflicts and support their recovery.

I myself insist on reparations; by that I mean measures to give survivors compensation, to enable them to start a new life, to give them the justice that is their due. It is a human right. I am working right now, along with my co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Nadia Murad, to create an International Fund for Survivors of Conflict-related Sexual Violence.

Corrupt governance also is at the core of Congo’s violence and poverty. I continue to work with others in Congo and around the world to build a Congo where the government serves its people, not a state where people are abused and exploited by their own government; a State that respects the rule of law, a State capable of bringing lasting development not just to the Congo but to all of Africa, a State based on a people-centred approach to governance, supporting the inherent, God-given human dignity of all citizens.

I can never love my neighbor as myself. I can never heal all the girls and women who have suffered from sexual violence in conflict situations. I can never solve all the problems of my country, the Congo, much less the problems of our world. But I wake up every day trying to love my neighbor a little more. I wake up wanting to do more to help survivors of sexual violence.

We live in a troubled world, a world filled with pain and beauty. Our ultimate job, whatever we choose as our profession, is to reduce some of that pain and increase our world’s beauty—to love your neighbor as you love yourself. I look forward to learning over time about all the tremendous things that you, the members of the Class of 2019, will do to respond to the pain and beauty of today’s world. We all stand together with you in that great calling.

Thank you very much.



A Penn Tradition Lives On:

Penn President Amy Gutmann sat with Ben on the Bench before the 2019 Commencement on Monday, May 20. They were joined by honorary degree recipients (standing from left to right) Neville Strumpf, Temple Grandin, Laurie Olin, along with Penn Trustee Chairman David L. Cohen, this year’s Commencement Speaker Bryan Stevenson, and Jill Tarter, Denis Mukwege, John Luger, son of the late Senator Richard G. Luger, who was there to receive his father’s honorary degree, and Jon Bon Jovi.

Photograph by Eddy Marencio

Penn Commencement Address given on Monday, May 20, 2019, by President Amy Gutmann at Franklin Field.

Weave a Tapestry of Communities

Good morning Class of 2019! You look fabulous!

Though maybe some of you feel just a little bit tired?

Last night, some of you were out to dinner with family. Some of you were up late packing. And some of you went out with classmates and friends.

As this is Penn, I have to ask: How many of you managed to do all three?

I thought so! Did anyone here last night find time to turn on the TV... maybe turn it on... to HBO?

Are you ready? It's time for a special edition of *Game of Thrones*!

Graduates: All of you today sit on either side of a great divide.

To my right: The Southern Alliance! Among you are several Great Houses.

Arrayed on the field are members of House Engineering! House Nursing! House Wharton! Houses Medicine to Dental; Law to Design; SP2 to Education; Annenberg to Vet! All of you to my right form the Southern Alliance!

Now, to my left: the Northern Alliance! Your Great Houses may be fewer, but man, are they big.

Arrayed on the field are the many members of House College! And the many more who together make House Arts and Sciences! All of you to my left form the Northern Alliance.

We have two sides, and spoiler alert: we're going to do battle. But instead of a battle with spears, this will be a Battle of Cheers.

Who left a Starbucks cup here? That's not supposed to be here! Oh well.... We'll figure that out later.

I'm going to call on each of your Alliances in turn. When I do, you need to make the most noise you can. The side that cheers the loudest wins! Ready?

OK, let's hear it from the Southern Alliance!

Impressive! OK, now let's hear it from the Northern Alliance! Also impressive!

Alright! Both your sides gave it your very best shot. Now it falls to me....

But I will not call a winner. Instead, I ask you to consider this a window into the human heart.

Here we are, proud members of the Penn community—this *beloved community*. Yet, when called upon, how readily we divide to do battle for our side.

Game of Thrones became a global phenomenon for many reasons. We obsess over the characters. We love the dragons and the drama. But its deepest attraction is allegorical.

In the walls of ice, in the thrones of iron, we see a mirror for our times.

We recognize our own world, where too many live for their tribe alone. Where too often, we listen only to those who think, look, and believe as we do.

Where the game seems rigged against open and free exploration. We hear too few dissenting voices, and we consider too few conflicting views. But remember: None of this is inevitable.

We can glorify our tribe to exclude all others. We can build up our walls and cast down those who are different.

Or we can better use the strength in our hearts and the power in our hands.

Our many identities and beliefs: We make these our threads. Our diverse backgrounds and goals: These become our loom.

From this world of differences, we can weave a tapestry of communities.

Weaving is hard work, especially when we interlace many into one. Our identities may clash. Our beliefs diverge. We disagree over where we want to go. We argue about the best way to get there.

But when—*together*—we embrace the challenge, the cloth of human understanding grows more resilient. We craft something stronger by far than iron thrones and walls of ice.

As many of you know, I am a first-generation college graduate. My family had very little money. We lived in a small town.

Try as I might to fit in, I always felt like an outsider and was often treated as one. My father, an immigrant, was the only person around who spoke with a strong foreign accent. In elementary school, I was the only Jewish girl.

One day in fifth grade, I learned just how easily false stereotypes about minorities can arise.

That's when another blond-haired, blue-eyed girl moved into my class. My best friend Diane took one look, turned to me, and said "Oh! She must be Jewish, too!"

My home town may not have understood or celebrated diversity, but it treated us respectfully.

I never took that for granted given my father's escape from Nazi Germany. My parents even joined with others in neighboring towns to create the first synagogue.

Wonderfully dedicated and caring teachers helped prepare me for college. And I couldn't wait to go.

But when I finally arrived on campus, I was in for a surprise. In fact, I was stunned. I had never before *felt poor*. As a scholarship student, suddenly, I was surrounded by people who were so astoundingly rich! I was fascinated by other differences—different faiths, politics, ethnicities and cultures.

Sure, at times it was uncomfortable. There were moments I wanted to turn around and go back home to my mother's warm embrace—and her home cooking!

But like every one of you, I made the best, most important choice of my life: I would pick up the threads of differences to weave myself a new community.

This would become my cause, my mission, my identity. I had found my purpose, rooted in beloved community.

I was inspired by the work of Dr. Martin Luther King. He called upon us all to embrace inclusion, love and justice. He preached the soul force of nonviolent protest.

He warned against the perils of tribalism, of clinging to the familiar and holding sacred the status quo.

King famously addressed his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" not to his jailers, but to his "fellow clergymen."

He challenged them to reject the status quo. In King's words, we find the essence of beloved community, recognizing that: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

"We are tied," he wrote, "in a single garment of destiny."

One of our seniors graduating today grew up just a few miles from here. Close at hand, but a world away, Penn was an unfamiliar place.

Just weeks after she was accepted, her father suddenly passed away. Then, only months into her freshman year, she lost her mother.

Family is our very first community, the rock on which we build our lives. Hers shattered in the passing of a season.

But she persevered, honoring her parents' memory by embracing a new community, a University where we pride ourselves on the tapestry we weave.

She championed educational access, leading Penn's first-generation, low-income student community. Any FGLI students here today?

Last fall, we learned that this senior had been named a 2019 Rhodes Scholar. We could not be more proud. Her name of course is Anea Moore. Stand up, Anea!

Each and every one of you today left behind comforting familiarity to come to Penn.

You embraced a more intellectually challenging, inclusive and demanding world. You have woven a rich tapestry of friends and memories.

Now, the task before you: Stay at the loom. Speak out and stand up. Weave together a world better, freer and more inclusive.

Just as there are no dragons, there is no Northern Alliance, no Southern Alliance—there are many overlapping and intersecting threads woven into a beloved community of humankind.

Together you weave that beautiful multi-faceted garment of human destiny, empowered by your Penn education.

So now, as befits this joyful occasion, I ask everybody to stand together as one beloved community. Families and friends, University leaders and faculty, stand with me and show our profound pride in the great Class of 2019.



Amy Gutmann

Photograph by Eddy Marengo

Remarks by Steven O. Kimbrough, Professor of Operations, Information and Decisions in the Wharton School and incoming Chair of the Faculty Senate.

Civic Engagement and Civic Service



Photograph by Eddy Marengo

Steven O. Kimbrough

President Gutmann, Trustees, honorary degree recipients, faculty colleagues, families, friends and most of all the class of 2019:

To each of the wonderful graduates of the class of 2019, I say, and I quote, “I greet you at the beginning of a great career.” The quote, while apt for our occasion, is not in fact from Benjamin Franklin. It is from Ralph Waldo Emerson in a letter to Walt Whitman. We’ll return to Franklin in a minute for his time-traveling response to Emerson’s remark.

Commencement is a time when we pause to reflect on achievements completed and achievements to come.

This is a conventional thought attending a ceremonial event, Commencement, in which old truths are trotted out as topics of discussion. It is well and good that we do so. The topics, and the truths that go with them, have lasted. They have lasted because, while the topics do not change from year to year, their meanings are dynamic and responsive to the tenor of the times. If we can keep them, take care of them, they will always be new.

I wish, in this context, to draw your attention to a member of the conventional list of Commencement topics: civic engagement and civic

service. In a republic, there is a fair amount of delegation (or “outsourcing”). Regardless of terminology, republics do not succeed unless citizens diligently monitor what the delegates are doing and unless the citizens contribute informed good judgment to maintain the republic’s health and functioning.

Without civic engagement and civic service, republics do not flourish, they fail. This has long been known. It is what Franklin meant when he was asked, at the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention, what kind of government had been created. “A republic, if you can keep it” was his reply.

Throughout his long life, Franklin exemplified civic engagement and service. Founding the University of Pennsylvania is certainly high on his list of accomplishments in this regard, and there was much else. Famously, in the Continental Congress just before signing the Declaration of Independence, in 1776, he said, “We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.” This was hardly an idle quip. The point was deadly serious. Franklin walked the walk of civic engagement and service.

Let me close by asking and answering a question. Franklin was successful as an entrepreneur, as a businessman, as a writer, as a scientist, as an inventor. How could he possibly find time for civic engagement and service? The answer, I submit, is that these all were together, mutually reinforcing aspects of a successful and meaningful life.

May we all learn from Benjamin Franklin and go forth and flourish. Thank you.

Penn Commencement Speakers: 2000-Present

2000: *Seamus Heaney:* Poet, critic and translator; 1995 Nobel Laureate in Literature

2001: *John McCain:* United States senator, Arizona

2002: *Jim Lehrer:* Executive editor and anchor, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*

2003: *Archbishop Desmond Tutu:* Chancellor, University of the Western Cape; 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Recipient

2004: *Bono:* Co-founder, DATA (Debt AIDS Trade Africa); lead singer, U2

2005: *Kofi Annan:* Secretary-General, United Nations; recipient of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize with the United Nations

2006: *Jodie Foster:* Academy Award winning (1989 & 1992) actress, director and producer

2007: *James A. Baker, III:* 61st United States Secretary of State

2008: *Michael R. Bloomberg:* Mayor, City of New York

2009: *Eric E. Schmidt:* Chairman of the Board & CEO, Google, Inc.

2010: *Jon Huntsman:* (C’87) United States Ambassador to China

2011: *Denzel Washington:* Academy Award winning (1989 & 2001) & Tony Award (2010) winning actor; director

2012: *Geoffrey Canada:* President & CEO, educational innovator & advocate

2013: *Joseph R. Biden, Jr.:* 47th Vice President of the United States

2014: *John Legend:* (C’99) Grammy Award-winning (2006, 2007, 2009 & 2011) songwriter and musician

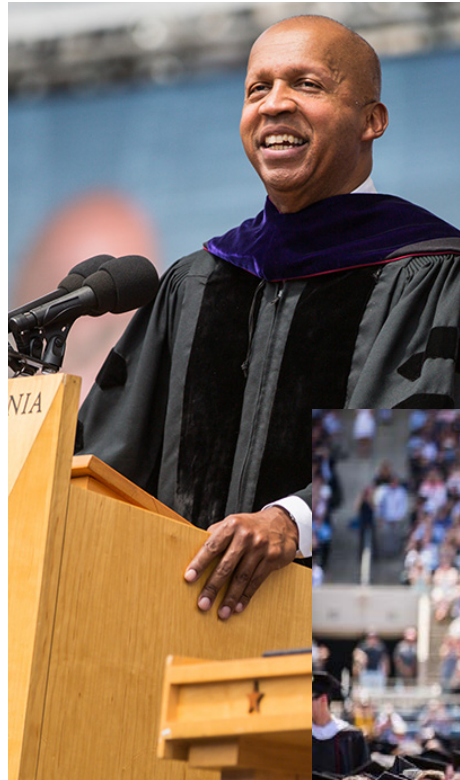
2015: *Samantha Power:* United States permanent representative to the United Nations; Pulitzer Prize-winning author

2016: *Lin-Manuel Miranda:* composer, writer and performing artist; Grammy (2009 & 2016), Tony (2008), MacArthur award (2015) and Pulitzer Prize (2016) recipient

2017: *Cory A. Booker:* United States Senator for New Jersey; Advocate for criminal justice reform and community empowerment.

2018: *Andrea Mitchell:* CW’67, Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent, NBC News; Host of “Andrea Mitchell Reports,” MSNBC

2019: *Bryan Stevenson:* lawyer, civil rights activist



Bryan Stevenson

This year’s Commencement speech is not being published at the request of the speaker.

To read prior years’ Penn Commencement speeches, visit *Almanac’s* website.

For a full list of Penn commencement speakers dating back to 1938 visit: <https://secure.www.upenn.edu/secretary/speakers38.html>

By the numbers:

Penn Graduate: 3 (Legend, Huntsman, Mitchell)
Grammy Award Winner: 3 (Bono, Legend, Miranda)

Tony Award Winner: 2 (Miranda, Washington)
Academy Award Winner: 2 (Washington, Foster)
Pulitzer Prize Winner: 2 (Miranda, Power)

Nobel Laureate: 3 (Heaney, Annan, Tutu)
Ambassador: 2 (Power, Huntsman)

Presidential Candidate: 2 (McCain, Booker)

Vice President: 1 (Biden)

Secretary of State: 1 (Baker)

Senator: 2 (McCain, Booker)

Mayor: 1 (Bloomberg)

CEO: 2 (Canada, Schmidt)

Activist: 4 (Bono, Booker, Canada, Stevenson)

TV Newscaster: 2 (Lehrer, Mitchell)

Photographs by Eddy Marengo

