

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed faculty, honored guests, and most importantly, my fellow graduates,

I stand before you today not as a typical graduate but as someone who has seen a fair share of life's ups and downs. At 60 years old, my journey to this point has been far from straightforward, and it brings me tremendous joy to be able to share this momentous day with each of you.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the University of Management and Technology for providing a supportive environment for learning and growth. A special thanks goes to the dedicated faculty who never let their teaching be confined to mere lectures. Your commitment to education is genuinely inspirational and has paved the way for many of us to not only acquire knowledge but also to become lifelong learners.

The guidance counselors have been our unsung heroes, working behind the scenes to help us maneuver through the intricate labyrinth of course selections, career paths, and personal growth. Your wisdom and kindness have been invaluable in helping us reach this day. Thank you for making an impact that will last a lifetime.

As a veteran, my experiences in the armed forces had already taught me much about discipline, responsibility, and the power of teamwork. Yet, my time here has proven that education and personal development are ceaseless journeys that offer something new at every turn. Balancing full-time courses on a part-time basis has been challenging, to say the least, but the skills and insights I have gained are immeasurable and will be cherished throughout my life.

Life has taught me that our experiences should never be judged by their length but by their depth. As we stand on the brink of a new chapter, let us carry forward the spirit of inquiry, the pursuit of excellence, and the compassion we have nurtured here at this esteemed institution.

In closing, I look around and see the faces of the future—bright, hopeful, and equipped to take on the world. We have come from different walks of life, and our paths here may have been disparate, but today, we unite under the banner of achievement, of a job well done.

If someone my age can stand here today, a proud graduate, then I assure you it's never too late to write a new chapter in your story. Let us step out into the world, armed with knowledge, fortified by experience, and driven by the understanding that our journey of learning is far from over.

Congratulations to the Class of 2023. We made it! Thank you.