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Jeff Immelt's Commencement Address

On Sunday, June 13, our own **Jeff Immelt**, Chairman of the Board and CEO of General Electric, delivered the main address at Dartmouth's 2004 Commencement exercises. Jeff also received an honorary degree, as described below:

- [Jeffrey R. Immelt \(Doctor of Laws\)](#) is a global business leader often recognized for successfully navigating his company through the turbulent and changing corporate environment of the last three years. The *Financial Times* named Immelt its "Man of the Year" in 2003 and wrote, "Mr. Immelt represents a different style of leadership. His careful remodeling of his own company is leading a wider reassertion of the primacy of shareholders and customers."

Here is Jeff's Address:

Thank you President Wright and Board of Trustees and faculty for this huge honor. And to the class of 2004 I am proud to be your commencement speaker. This is the second graduation I have attended at Dartmouth, and here is what I remember from the commencement speaker at my graduation. Hmm, hmm, see, so I know my role today is to be brief and I promise to pay more attention this time.

Now, you know Jim Wright as president, but he was a history professor when I was a student. Jim



Jeffrey R. Immelt

taught a course called "The History of the American West," and it was always oversubscribed. I'm sure because of his interesting style and not an early tendency towards grade inflation, but as a teacher and a dean and the provost and now president, Jim has served this college very well and I want to say thanks to him.

I would like to congratulate my fellow recipients of honorary degrees. Each has made a powerful contribution to society and it's on their behalf that I'm giving this speech. But to be honest I'm a little intimidated. You know *The Dartmouth* quoted students calling me an uninspiring and uninteresting choice for commencement speaker. You would have preferred Bono or Jon Stewart or Colin Powell and you have every right to expect that the fortune your parents paid for your education should get you a world leader. But do you really believe that an aging rock star would speak to the class that created Keggy, a human beer keg, to be the new

college mascot? I mean even this, though, by the way, beats the last time I was mentioned in *The D* in 1974 when my room-mates and I borrowed the Christmas tree from the Hanover Inn and put it in our room in South Fayerweather. We were actually streaking at the time, but there are parts of this story that GE shareholders need not know.

But from the outset, I want you to know that there are some positive aspects to having the chairman of GE speak at your graduation. For instance, if any of you need a jet engine right now, I can hook you up, wholesale. And as the leader of the NBC network and Universal Studios, I have unique power. We actually have a TV show called "Fear Factor". This is a reality series watched by 40 million Americans every week - go figure. In this show, contestants complete dangerous physical stunts and feast on delicacies like cockroaches and cow eyeballs until one of them passes out. And as an alumnus, I could rename the entire show "The Dartmouth First Year Show" or "Saturday Night on Webster Avenue" just for you. And if these credentials still fail to impress you I will shamelessly add that I could actually give you a job. At least, uh, at least that got your parents' attention.

These are things Bono and Jon Stewart just can't do. But you know something? The comments in *The Dartmouth* got me thinking life is about ups and downs. I've been criticized by the best of them from *The Wall Street Journal* to *Fortune* magazine and you think when you have a position like mine as CEO that people would be nice to you.

Instead you're only a bigger target. I'll read you just a few letters I received just this week. Here's one about the war: "Dear Mr. Immelt, I find NBC's coverage of the war in Iraq to be disgusting. You're nothing but a liberal mouthpiece to the anti-war movement. You should be ashamed." Here's another doozy: "Dear Mr. Immelt, What's wrong with my stock? I purchased GE shares in 2000 and you've lost my money. By the way, you're also overpaid. And here's another one: Hey you! You're unreasonable and selfish. You never listen to my point of view. Go away." Geez, sorry, that's actually an e mail from my daughter Sarah.

But I'm happy that the Class of 2004 has a little attitude - you're gonna need it. Perhaps no class in the last 50 years will experience a world that's changed so much from the time you came to Dartmouth till the time you're leaving. You began in 2000 and the horizon was bright - we were at the end of a 20-year economic boom, the world was at peace, and the only debate was how many of you would be millionaires by the time you were 30. But while you were here all hell broke loose. The bubble economy collapsed, the tragedy of 9/11 created global insecurity, the world is at war for the first time in a generation, and corporation scandals rock the market. No one predicted these events. I graduated in 1978 and things were challenging in those days as well. The economy was in a recession due to high oil prices, there was unrest in the Middle East and Americans were held hostage in Iran. Jobs were tough to find and unemployment was over 10 percent.

In times like these, it's always good to remember that there are always times like these. All generations experience change. You cannot predict the future, so don't waste any

time worrying about it. The challenge you must accept, right now, is to make yourself better everyday. The era we live in belongs to people who believe in themselves, but are focused on needs of others. I call it being great and good. Great in the sense of competing to be your best and good in the sense of building trust through compassion, humanity, and love. And if you commit to being both great and good, you will succeed in any environment.

So I'm not here today because I'm a star - I'm not Bono or Jon Stewart or Colin Powell. Rather I'm here because I'm just like you. I left this campus as a 22-year old with nothing but a good education and a sense of confidence. But there are five values that I learned right here at Dartmouth that helped me build a life where I could do my best without ever losing a sense for the type of person I wanted to be.

First, commit to learn everyday. You have to have an incredible thirst for knowledge. Learn from the work you do, from the people you admire. Learn by hurting and failing and don't take things at face value. Dig deep to discover the truth for yourself. I've made it a point to learn about the world. In fact, I spend 25 percent of my time outside the United States. And over the last 20 years, I've visited and studied China. Most people in the United States are negative about China because they see it as a threat. But I never trusted what other people said about China. I wanted to learn it on my own. And what I saw were great people - people who want what you want. And with them we built a \$5 billion business from the ground up. Your curiosity and desire to learn things on your own terms is really a key to success. Dartmouth gave me a thirst for learning and learning is the key to self-confidence and self-

confidence is the foundation for change.

Second, work hard with passion and courage. Life is a marathon of contribution. You really must work hard to accomplish something. But hard work over the long haul takes happiness. Find your passion and get good at it. Competence is a rare commodity in this day and age and when you work with teams of passionate people, you can solve any problem. I became chairman of GE four days before September 11th - talk about timing. In addition to the human tragedy, I saw planes with our engines hit buildings we insured, covered by a network I owned. To be honest, I was a little bit afraid for GE and our country. But in a crisis leaders must get to work. We took care of our people, we gave \$10 million to the Twin Towers fund, but most importantly we got up the next day and invested in the future. We worked around the clock for months, and today we are a better company. But I learned a lot about the power of teams, the power of hope, and the power of confidence. You must have courage. I had no idea where my journey would take me when I left Dartmouth, but I did know I would go at full-speed. Leave here with a passion to live your dreams.

Third, be a giver. You were admitted to Dartmouth because you were great - valedictorians, captains, and club presidents. So chances are, you're going to be in a position in your lives where people look at you for leadership. In the past, being great meant you had lead by giving orders. Today it means you can just lead by giving. And the best thing you can give as a leader is a reason to trust. People want to trust. They're hungry for it. But they're selective. They'll only give it to a motivator, a communicator, a teacher, a real person. Someone who

in good times and bad always does the right thing. I spend about 40 percent of my time on people, and despite what you see from Donald Trump on "The Apprentice" I spend very little of my time firing people. Most times I'm teaching. Helping people to be their best. Good leaders don't tell people what to do, they give teams capability and inspiration. And Dartmouth gave me balance and taught me that there would never be success without friendship.

Fourth, you must have confidence. And here I'm talking about confidence in your ability to tackle the world's toughest problems. The world needs a few heroes today so don't take the easy or predictable path. Dartmouth gave me a sense that I, personally, could make a difference. Today I'm committed to improving healthcare in the United States. One of the areas that's motivated me is to find treatments for Alzheimer's. This is a terrible disease that recently took the life of President Reagan. Alzheimer's will increase in importance as the population ages. My company has invested billions and I believe the technology exists to find therapies that give people hope. Can you imagine how we're going to feel when we solve this problem? And I'm confident we will. But there are many jobs we must work on together. The Class of 2004 can help to improve the quality of education in this country. We've fallen behind on global competitiveness and as both parents and educators, we can do better. We must reduce America's dependence on oil - my generation has used a lot of it - but there will be shortages in your lifetime. Use your brains and determination to drive conservation and find alternative sources of energy. And when you finish all of that, maybe we could work on the toughest issue I've seen - building a

few new dorms at Dartmouth. Soon it will be your time to give back to the institutions that made a difference in your life and when the call comes, answer it. Follow the lead of the 50th reunion class and that way your children will not have to live in the same dorm room, exactly the same dorm room, as Daniel Webster.

Finally, be an optimist. It's easy to be a cynic today. People don't want to trust any institution and in recent years there are plenty of reasons to expect the worst. But cynicism is corrosive because it creates excuses. You know, I'm not here today because I've had a perfect career. Ten years ago I was going through a tough patch and my boss, Jack Welch, said to me, "You know, Jeff, I love you, but if you don't improve I'm going to fire you." That really got my attention. But I was never afraid of failure. I realized that I was responsible for my own success and that every day offers a new beginning and I was confident in my ability to improve. So optimism is a choice. It's a way of living - a way of moving through the world. I've hired thousands of people in my life and I will tell you a simple truth. I hire people as much on attitude as potential. There is nothing less appealing than a person with a chip on their shoulder. And there's nothing more appealing than a can-do attitude. A sense of humor and the ability to laugh at yourself went a long way at Dartmouth. But the same is true in the board room, the operating room, at home, or in life itself.

I hope you had a great time at Dartmouth. If you stop here, if you really think these were your best days, then you truly have nothing. But if you go forward and build on the values of Dartmouth you can live a life that will be both great and good. In my day I was a frequently

serious student, a decent football player, and boy did I have fun. I learned a lot in the classroom and I learned a lot about myself. And I knew that Dartmouth was the beginning and not the end. And for the last 25 years, I've had a career that's been both interesting and fun. Today I'm the 9th chairman in the 125 year history of GE. I run a \$150 billion company with 300,000 wonderful people. GE is the most valuable company in the world and a leader in life-changing technology. I work for investors and I have a vast responsibility to perform for them. I have a powerful job, but I've never wanted to be powerful. I want to be a different leader in a different day. I hope to be judged by what I do and not how much money I make. I want to create a company that's powered by ideas and values and people. And I hope to reflect what I learned right here and in some small way repay my debt to Dartmouth.

I worked hard to get where I am but I've also been very lucky. And the peak of my good fortune was coming to this campus 30 years ago. Every time I cross the Connecticut River bridge, no matter how old I am, I think of my parents. It was their sacrifice and vision for education that brought me to Dartmouth and this lucky break I got, this great education, has allowed me to lead the company where my father worked for 38 years. So before you leave here today, you might want to tell your parents 'thanks.'

So I may not be what you wanted, I'm not special. I'm okay with who I am and I don't really want to be anybody else. I'm a son of Dartmouth, a husband, a father, a business leader; I'm loyal to my friends and I love my family. I am, and always will be, an optimist. But the great part about life is that sometimes ordinary Dartmouth grads, people like you and me, get a

chance to do extraordinary things. And if you're sitting out there wondering about the future, sad to leave your friends, or hoping desperately for this speech to end, I want you to know that there some amazing days ahead. Ultimately you define your own success. Some of you will be doctors or lawyers or parents or teachers, but make five choices: that you will keep learning; that you will live and work with passion and courage; that you will give of yourself to earn the trust of others; that you will always take on the world's toughest problems; and that you will be an optimist. Live the values of Dartmouth - a commitment to be both great and good in a world where the journey truly counts.

Many nice things have happened to me in my life, but none greater than today. I promise to earn my honorary degree through my actions and my contributions to the world. I promise to make you proud.

Class of 2004, thank you for the chance to be a small part of this very big day. Now go get 'em. Thanks very much.

Re-Election Time for John Carney

From John Carney: It's hard to believe that nearly four years have gone by since I was elected Delaware's Lieutenant Governor.

It has been a very busy and productive first term, and I'm proud of the record we have compiled to run on in November. In addition to serving as President of the Delaware

State Senate and Chairing the Board of Pardons, I have been active in education, health care, criminal justice, land use, economic development, and state budget and finance issues.



I am very pleased with the progress we've made on a number of initiatives I've been working on. Our **Models of Excellence in Education** project is in its second year of honoring schools that have succeeded in raising student achievement and sharing the practices that helped them to do so with other educators in Delaware. The Models project was recently honored as a finalist for the Council of State Governments Innovation Award.

My physical fitness program, **The Lieutenant Governor's Challenge**, continues to register new people every day. Recently we signed up our 11,000th participant, and that is a lot of people in Delaware! These people have made a commitment to be more physically active and help us reduce the high rates of diabetes,

heart disease and cancer in Delaware. With new schools, businesses and faith-based programs joining the Challenge every day, we're on our way to making the First State the Fit State.

In addition, I have been leading several important state efforts at the Governor's request, serving as chair of the Health Care Commission, the Delaware Center for Education Technology, the Criminal Justice Council and the Livable Delaware Advisory Council.

As rewarding as my first term has been, it is time to focus on the need to win re-election this fall, so that we can continue the important work that we have begun. I was successful in my first bid for public office in large part because of the financial support I received from family and friends. The response I received from my Dartmouth friends was overwhelming. It was incredible to me that the ties formed over 25 years ago on the Hanover Plain have remained so strong, despite the time and distance that separates us. I was extremely fortunate to have the support of so many of my Dartmouth friends in 2000, and I hope I can still count on that support.

As we did in 2000, we've already had a successful fundraising event in the San Francisco Bay Area, hosted by my sister, Margaret McCaffery, and sponsored by **Sam Coffey** and **Phil Jackmauh**. This time, though, we had the opportunity to start the day watching our own Buddy Teevens '79 lead the Stanford Cardinal football team to a win over the Arizona State Sun Devils down on The Farm. Afterward, we enjoyed lots of good food and drink and plenty of laughs at my sister's house. We were joined by a number of the Bay Area, Big Green faithful, including stalwarts like former San

Francisco Supervisor and California State Senator Quentin Kopp '54, as well as Peter Bogardus '54 and youngsters like Brian Stretch '85.

As my campaign starts to move into high gear, I would like to ask for your financial support once again. This election is a critical one for me. Not only is it important to be re-elected as Lt. Governor, but it is critical for the future elections that lie ahead. Everyone in Delaware will be watching this election to assess my strength as a candidate for Governor in 2008. And so your support is needed now more than ever.

I hope you will join other Dartmouth friends and make a financial contribution to my campaign. Your help will enable us to take our message to the people of Delaware, emphasizing all the positive things we have done in my first term and my vision for Delaware's future. I appreciate very much anything you can do to help. Individual and corporate contributions can be made up to the amount of \$1,200.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Hope all is well,

John C. Carney, Jr.

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Hundreds of Same-Sex Couples Wed in Massachusetts

By PAM BELLUCK

BOSTON, May 17 — Hundreds of gay and lesbian couples streamed into city halls from Boston to the Berkshires on Monday as Massachusetts became the first state to allow same-sex marriages.

Weddings were held on a hill overlooking a park, in churches and synagogues, in the shoebox quarters of justices of the peace, and on a Christmas tree farm with peacocks, pigs, turkeys and Icelandic sheep nearby.

"Your marriage is an example to others of how life is supposed to work," Rosaria E. Salerno, Boston's city clerk, told Joe Rogers and Tom Weikle, choking with emotion as she married the longtime couple in City Hall's first same-sex ceremony Monday morning. "You really are already married. The only thing that's been wrong with your marriage, if I can put it that way, is that it hasn't been public. And this is so exciting because the moment I put my name on that piece of paper, your marriage is public."

Gay rights advocates hailed this day, which fell on the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Brown*

v. Board of Education, as an occasion that evoked the triumphs — and the social vindication — of the civil rights era.

After an emotional court and legislative battle, Massachusetts now joins a tiny list of places where same-sex couples can marry — Belgium, the Netherlands, and the Canadian



Julie, right, and Hillary Goodridge, the lead plaintiffs in the lawsuit that brought gay marriage to Massachusetts, after receiving the waiver that allowed them to be married on Monday without the customary three-day waiting period.

provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. Same-sex couples have been issued marriage licenses in San Francisco and Multnomah County, Ore., but those licenses have not been state-sanctioned and are the focus of legal battles.

On the first day here, the issuing of licenses and the marriage ceremonies proceeded without many snags or confrontations. It was unclear how many same-sex couples sought licenses here Monday, but at least 900 couples showed up in 29 of the state's 351 cities and towns, according to town clerks and the

office of the secretary of the commonwealth.

There were small demonstrations by opponents of gay marriage — and camera crews from a national conservative organization, the Family Research Council, gathering images to use in anti-gay marriage presentations.

But the seeds of a full-fledged conflict were planted on Monday by scores of out-of-state couples who came to Massachusetts to apply for marriage licenses despite Gov. Mitt Romney's refusal to allow gay men and lesbians from other states to marry here. The governor has said that a 1913 state law, adopted in part to block interracial marriages, forbids Massachusetts from marrying anyone who cannot be legally married in their home state.

At least four communities — Provincetown, Somerville, Worcester and Springfield — decided to defy Governor Romney and issue out-of-state couples marriage licenses even if they said on their application that they had no intention of moving to Massachusetts.

"No matter who you are or where you come from, if you fill out this application you will be given a license to marry," Mayor Joseph Curtatone of Somerville, just north of Boston, said on the steps of City Hall, where at least a fifth of the more than 40 couples came from other states, including two couples who arrived on the \$10 bus from Chinatown in New York.

"Those of you from out of state, welcome to Somerville," the mayor said. Officials in those towns could face fines or criminal charges for violating Governor Romney's edict.

And the out-of-state couples who flocked to those communities on

Monday face the prospect that Governor Romney will invalidate their marriages. They also face — some of them willingly — possible legal battles in their home states if they seek to have their marriage recognized or to apply for benefits accorded married couples.

Governor Romney, a Republican who had tried to delay same-sex marriage until a state constitutional amendment could come before voters in November 2006, issued a two-sentence statement: "All along, I have said an issue as fundamental to society as the definition of marriage should be decided by the people. Until then, I intend to follow the law and expect others to do the same."

Green Cards

Park Dougherty: After graduation I made a film about my great-uncle, Celius Dougherty. Twenty five years later I'm still on the case, now as a promoter of his opera, art songs and folk arrangements. This May marks a milestone in the campaign to bring his wonderful music back from the grave - ie., permanently out of print.

G. Schirmer will be releasing two editions of "Celius Dougherty: Folk Songs and Chanties," one for high voice and piano, one for low voice and piano. In April Schirmer released "Celius Dougherty: 30 Art Songs." In addition to these publications of 48 songs, there will be 11 performances of his opera for children, "Many Moons," at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, S.C., May 29-June 7. Come on down!!! Charleston during Spoleto is tough to top!!

Details on these publications and performances - including one by me on May 30th - are provided at <http://www.celiusdougherty.org>.

While there you can also sample some of the tunes and order the CD, "Serenader," which features a soprano now singing leading roles for the Vienna Opera, Jennifer O'Loughlin.

Along the way I got to visit with **Joan McGivern** '78, who's an attorney with ASCAP. The last time I had seen her was on the set of the gripping video docudrama, "Men & Girls," which premiered in Hanover in May of 1979.

I just heard from the widow of my father's Dartmouth roommate, Dave Echols '44, about the opera and song publications. Corresponding with her reminded me of two Dartmouth aspects of the story which you might add to whatever you do with my news.

My father, Francis Dougherty '44, was involved in this effort in many ways. He financially supported the documentary on Celius that I completed in 1984. He also supplied much of the sheet music which Schirmer just published. After my Freshman year in 1975, he attended a Dartmouth reunion, picked me up, then drove me down to Boston where he purchased about twenty Celius songs. 25 years later I suggested to G. Schirmer that it produce a volume with all of the Celius songs it had published from 1925-1960, plus thirteen manuscripts. A year later my contact at GS said, "We're interested. Send us the music." I replied, "I thought you had it. You published it." Fortunately, thanks to my father's shopping spree in Boston and other collection efforts (involving various university music libraries) I had everything and sent it! 2 years later, voila!!

Dartmouth played another role in the art song publication. The introduction includes remarks that

Celius made on various titles. To his comment on "Serenader," the GS editor added the point that Samuel Barber had also set the same text, that there was a singular but significant discrepancy in the words and that GS didn't know which composer had been true to the text. The poem had been published in a 1927 book, which we couldn't find - until I checked the Dartmouth Library. Needless to say Celius was true to the text and that absurd comment by the GS editor was eliminated altogether!

park@charleston.net.

Annalisse Mayer [an anonymous pseudonym for one of our classmates] has published a new novel, *When Alice Met Her Favorite Movie Star in an Elevator*.

For more information about Annalisse Mayer visit her website: <http://home.att.net/~annalisse.mayer/>

Message from **Jim Bullion** back in March: Well, I made it to Kuwait - after the longest roadtrip in Iraqi history: 700 miles from Irbil, through the Sunni Triangle, the heart of Baghdad, the deserts and (sadly much drained) marshes of Southern Iraq, with 42 Hummers, 9 flatbeds, and 130 soldiers - all without incident. Crossing the border and taking odd the flak jackets was a wonderful and emotional moment.

We are now turning in some of our equipment and preparing the rest for shipment home. We are still targeting March 10 to fly to Ft. Bragg, NC for out-processing.

Thanks so much for all the prayers and support along the way. I am happy to report that I had to award only one Purple Heart this year, and

that was for minor injuries relating to the Feb. 1st bombings in Irbil.

I have attached an essay I wrote about those bombings, which killed 119 people, including several of my friends. Again, thanks. I am looking forward to getting back into life at home and to seeing you soon.

With all my best, Jim
james.bullion@us.army.mil
404th Civil Affairs Battalion

Ugliness

By Lieutenant Col. James L. Bullion

Hollywood likes to have explosions seem so dramatic and beautiful – billowing clouds of orange and yellow flames, a long rumbling roar, people diving majestically to get out of the glorious path of destruction. Beautiful!

Reality is much less dramatic – and much, much uglier. One minute a room is filled with happy people greeting each other to celebrate a holiday – a reception line, people greeting each other with happiness and hope for the future, trays of candy being passed around, bright flowers around the room, small boys shyly greeting people they respect...

Then, bang! a single, seemingly small detonation – not much louder than a truck backfiring, a small cloud of white and gray smoke, then silence, followed by wails and a scramble to reach the wounded and the dying. That pleasant room turned instantly into a chamber of horror and ugliness almost beyond comprehension. Happiness transformed to grief, anger and heart-numbing sadness.

As the wounded are carried and helped away, the lifeless corpses, in various stages of dismemberment, remain, blackened and ugly. Large and small pieces of flesh and bone are splattered on walls and floors. Blood soaks the furniture, the

carpets, the thousands of pieces of ceiling tile that have been blown everywhere. A leg lies off to one side, its owner unknown. A chair sits burned and blackened, a small wisp of smoke rising from its charred cushion. Nothing is left but ugliness. Even the smell is ugly – the same smell that permeated the streets of New York City in the days following Sept. 11, 2001 – the smell of death.

This is terrorism: an evil force that chooses death over life, war over peace, oppression over freedom, ugliness over beauty. The beings (they cannot possibly be humans) who commit these acts seem to be especially enraged by happiness, and beauty and free choice. Like so many dark forces, they want to hide or destroy – including human smiles – and replace them with darkness, sadness and ugliness.

The murderers who killed 117 people in Irbil, Iraq on the first of February were not freedom fighters, nor were they religious zealots struggling to express their faith. Most of those committing such acts throughout this country are not Iraqis, but rather al Qaeda trained or inspired foreigners. Those Iraqis involved in these attacks are those who yearn for the days when they held sway over their fellow citizens as part of Saddam's gang of thieves, rapists, and murderers. They are selfish, controlling beings who only want to impose their ugly view of the world on others. They see a world in which women are mere chattel with no rights and in which no dissent is tolerated. Democracy is not even in their lexicon.

If we love life and beauty and freedom we must commit ourselves to fight this evil with all of our energy and resources. It will be a long, costly war, as these people are smart, rich, and ruthless. It may

require us sacrifice some of our wealth, some of our lives, and, temporarily, even some of our freedom. The alternative, though, is to leave to future generations a sad and ugly world, with its beauty and

joy torn away by so many bombs and with its people impoverished both physically and spiritually.

LTC Bullion, a US Army Civil Affairs officer, served in Northern Iraq for a

year. He had left the building in which one of the February 1st bombs was detonated only minutes before the explosion.