

President's Welcome

by Susan D. Stuebner, Ed.D.

Chairman Volanakis, and members of our Board of Trustees ... distinguished guests, faculty and staff, family and friends, and graduates, welcome to Colby-Sawyer's Commencement Ceremony for the Class of 2018.

Graduates, this is your day, and we look forward to celebrating you and all of your accomplishments.

This Commencement ceremony and its rituals provide you an opportunity to reflect on your journey to this point and to look forward to your next steps. Today, we celebrate Colby-Sawyer's history, we honor those whose service and leadership exemplify its values, and we anticipate the promise of your bright futures.

Today, we also honor two women who forged "firsts" in their careers. Dr. Peggy A. Stock, Colby-Sawyer's sixth leader, was the college's first female president. Senator Jeanne Shaheen is the first woman to serve as both a governor and a United States Senator.

We also celebrate another first in Colby-Sawyer's 180-year history: our first cohort of graduate students, all of them registered nurses at our partner institution Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center who have earned their Master of Science in Nursing degrees here at Colby-Sawyer. In addition to this being a special day for them and their families, it is a momentous day for the college.

Undergraduates, your Millennial generation has received a lot of attention. While some of the descriptors are not ones with which you may want to be associated, one that I value is your idealism. As I mentioned, this morning we are honored to recognize U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen. Her presence here today is a wonderful Colby-Sawyer story. Last summer, one of our students was an intern with the Senator in Washington, D.C. He was able to live and work in the city thanks to an internship grant program funded by a generous alumna. Arriving back at campus, this student encouraged me to consider Senator Shaheen for an Honorary Degree. I have observed the senator's leadership throughout her various and significant roles in New Hampshire with great

admiration. Without the push from our student, however, I don't know if I would have had the courage to ask if she would accept our honorary degree. Thank you, Omar, and thank you, Senator.

Graduates, I encourage you to continue to dream big, to maintain your optimism and idealism for what your world can be, and to continue to ask important questions.

One of Colby-Sawyer's traditions is to ask the Jack Jensen Award recipient, the college's highest teaching honor, to offer the Commencement Address. This tradition exemplifies our core strength at Colby-Sawyer and the enormous and transformative power of the relationships between our students, faculty and staff. We look forward to hearing from Assistant Professor TJ Smith in a bit.

Graduates, take a moment now and think back to when you arrived at Colby-Sawyer as a new student. Remember how you felt and who you were then. Fast forward to today, and consider how much you have grown. At Colby-Sawyer, you learned how to think critically, to reason, to see connections between disciplines, to question on what basis an argument is made, and to imagine and develop your own contributions to knowledge. Here, you not only have gained considerable knowledge, you have practiced understanding. As you go forward, continue to listen, to ask difficult questions, to respect others' points of views, to seek to understand, to complement one another's talents and backgrounds, and to illustrate how much can be accomplished when we build relationships with others and allow our differences to enhance our strengths.

Simon Synek, an author and motivational speaker about leadership, gave a notable interview last year about the importance of Millennials to couple their idealism and desire for impact with patience. He said:

It's as if [millennials are] standing at the foot of a mountain and they have this abstract concept called impact that they want to have on the world, which is the summit. What they don't see is the mountain. I don't care if you go up the mountain quickly or slowly, but there's still a mountain. And so what this ... generation needs to learn is patience. That some things that really, really matter, like love or job fulfillment, joy, love of life, self-confidence, a skillset, any of these things, all of these things take time. Sometimes you can expedite pieces of it, but

the overall journey is arduous and long and difficult and if you don't ask for help and learn that skillset, you will fall off the mountain.

Colby-Sawyer graduates, however, know all about mountains – you have climbed Mount Kearsarge with your friends, faculty and staff every year on Mountain Day. As you leave campus today, remember that you will take with you all the experiences, relationships and accomplishments you developed here. Remember the feeling you had when you reached the summit of Mount Kearsarge, when you finished presenting your Capstone, when you finally saw signs of spring after a long winter. You have practiced patience. You have built meaningful relationships. And you have gained knowledge that will serve you well.

Believe and trust in who *you* have grown to be and will continue to become. You are ready for what comes next.

Finally, each of you has had someone who supported you along the way ... a parent, a family member, a best friend, a faculty mentor or staff member ... The fortunate among you had more than one champion who celebrated your successes and supported you through your challenges. Many of them are here today. Graduates, I invite you to recognize all of them with a round of applause.

Thank you.