

Thank you, President Hogan. And thank you for those kind words as well. I should also thank Jack Rowe and all the University Trustees for this recognition. When Mike Hogan called me about this Honorary Doctorate, I was totally shocked by the idea of it. Yet, I am humbled, flattered and very appreciative of the degree.

Let me also say a sincere congratulations to all you graduates. I understand how relieved and happy you must be and you certainly deserve every bit of enjoyment on this Special Day in your lives.

Never in my wildest dreams, would I ever have thought on my graduation day many, many years ago when I was in your seat, that I would be back here in this position. I fully expect one or more of you will be in this role some day.

When I was asked to say a few words today, I thought of ideas I could share with you that I would not have known or thought of on the day I graduated from UConn. Let me share with you what I will call a few keys to success as I have learned them in my professional or personal life.

First, I would say, approach life with a positive attitude. Certainly you have to be realistic, whatever the subject or circumstance. Having a positive attitude helps you build self confidence. Having a “can do” attitude will help you be enthusiastic and passionate about what you do professionally.

Those are two excellent leadership skills, and people love to be around a leader. Now, as you graduate from UConn and go out in the world, so to speak, and perhaps end up in a new environment where you are uncertain or undecided, I guarantee you, if you “look at the glass as half full,” you will always be more successful than the individual who negatively “looks at the glass as half empty.”

A second key to success I would call protecting your health. Ultimately, you and you alone are responsible for your health in life. Without a solid health foundation, it is very hard to perform to your fullest. I have been fortunate in my life with only a few minor health issues or lapses, but I have seen a number of individuals in the course of my life and career, put their jobs and their lives at risk because they ignored solid health advice.

You have great fitness facilities here at UConn, along with availability to all manner of diet and nutritional information. But even if you did not take advantage of them while you were here, commit to yourself now that you will take charge of the future condition of your health.

The third key to success I would call personal accountability. I refer to this as “looking in the mirror.” So many times in high school or college or in professional life, we all tend to blame someone else for a mediocre grade in a course, or underachievement in a sport or, worse yet, a major professional failure.

How many times have you heard someone say “I only got a C because I had a lousy professor,” or “We lost because the Coach didn’t put me in.” And now I’m telling you in your professional life you will hear similar blame statements like, “I didn’t get that promotion because the boss likes so and so,” and on and on.

I’m saying there is a direct connection between holding yourself personally accountable and having a positive attitude. I’ll tell you a personal example.

When I graduated from UConn in the mid-sixties, I wanted to work for a major NYC bank. All my sources were telling me that only Ivy League grads make it in the big banks in N.Y. Well, once I was working there awhile, and yes I was up against guys from Yale, and Penn’s Wharton School, and the Tuck Business School at Dartmouth, I realized that even some of these guys would play the blame game when they didn’t get the recognition they thought was due them, instead of looking in the mirror and asking themselves how they could have influenced the outcome differently.

I soon realized that my factual knowledge of corporate finance and monetary economics from UConn was just as strong as theirs, but with high work ethic and a “can do” attitude I did succeed. No, I did not get all the promotions I thought I could have, but the ones I did get were far more satisfying to me, I think, than those other individuals who are probably still sitting around complaining about some old boss who was not fair to them.

But, no matter how strong your education is from UConn, and no matter how disciplined you are at protecting your health and carrying a positive attitude, a certain percentage of your success is being in the right place at the right time – being in the department, or the company, or the institution where the promotions are made, or where the bonuses are paid. Some of that timing you can not always influence.

What you can influence is a lot like they say in football, focus on one play at a time. Focusing on doing your job to the best of your ability day by day is all you can influence. And I would add, have fun with it, as you start the next phase of your life of continual learning.

In closing, I ask you to promise me, if you remember anything I have said today, even if you don’t agree with what I said, please remember two words from oday, two words from all your years at UConn.

GOOOOOOOO HUSSSSKIES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

GOOD LUCK TO YOU ALL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!