



**STEVENS**  
INSTITUTE of TECHNOLOGY  
THE INNOVATION UNIVERSITY

**President Nariman Farvardin  
144th Commencement Address  
Undergraduate Ceremony  
May 25, 2016**

Stevens Class of 2016:

It is with mixed emotions that I send you off to your next adventure. I have had the honor and privilege to get to know many of you during your time at Stevens. I have seen you on campus, I've learned about your senior projects, I've watched you on the athletic field, I've welcomed you into Hoxie House, and I've watched you become the talented, polished, young men and women you are—full of potential, full of promise. I am inspired by you.

Today, you will be joining the ranks of a prestigious and august group—alumni of Stevens Institute of Technology. Forty-thousand alumni across the globe represent Stevens Institute of Technology. You are joining such luminaries as the co-founder of General Motors Corporation, the inventor of Bubble Wrap packaging, the visionary behind Verizon Fios, the founder of the scientific management movement, the inventor of email protocols, the inventor of the mobile art form, a director of NASA and many, many more whose contributions have literally changed the world.

And that is what I expect from you—to change the world. You have the education. You have the tools. You have the work ethic. You have the drive. You also have the responsibility.

For it is people like you...problem-solvers, innovators, masters of technology grounded in a deep understanding of the world and its problems and opportunities...who need to step up, who need to create the future.

Alumni who are with us today will remember a saying that they may have heard at freshman orientation—it was a way of impressing upon new students how rigorous an education they were in store for at Stevens. The saying—look to your left and look to your right, and one of the three of you won't be here by graduation—was unfortunately true, when schools like Stevens thought it was better to weed out students than to help them succeed.

I'd like to ask you to take a moment to do that now—look to your left and look to your right. Say hello. Wish the graduate next to you congratulations on his or her accomplishments. Shake their hands. These people around you are your classmates, your friends, your soon-to-be fellow alumni, maybe your future colleagues and business partners. They are the movers and the shakers who will change the world.

As you leave here to take on the challenges that lie ahead, I ask that you remember the Stevens motto, *Per Aspera Ad Astra*, through adversity to the stars. In your career and in your life, you will, no doubt, encounter difficulty. You will face challenges. You will find yourself in situations where you are not sure of the correct path. At these times, think back to those challenges you overcame

here at Stevens...those difficult problems, those demanding professors, those classes you struggled with. And now, look at where you are today. Think of the toolkit that helped you through those situations ... perseverance, hard work, help from friends and faculty, whatever it took to make it to today. You will rely on those same tools over and over again throughout your life.

As you embark on your next phase—whether it is a job, a company you have started, whether it is graduate school, or something else—I encourage you to embrace the challenges. Look for interesting problems to solve. Step outside your comfort zone. Find a support system. And, importantly, act with integrity.

This is my advice to you.

That, and one last thing.

Come back and visit us often. You will make us happy.

*Per aspera ad astra.*