

Undergraduate Commencement
Sunday, June 11, 2006
Qwest Field

Welcome to Seattle University's Undergraduate Commencement for the class of 2006. It is right that we hold it here at Qwest Field because it allows all of your family and friends to be with you in this milestone celebration of your life. It is also right that your commencement is held in the stadium of the winning Seattle Seahawks and should-be Superbowl Champions because this is a day of a big win for you—graduation from college, from a premier university—which is more important in its effects on you than any Superbowl ring would be.

My fondest hope for each of you is that you live out your education with grateful hearts. What a difference that makes if you face the challenges of your life, enter into your careers, use your education in service of others... and do it all with gratitude. Gratitude transforms lives. I join with you this morning in thanking for their love and support, their belief in you and their pride, your parents, grandparents, families and friends. That's where gratitude today should begin.

Know also the gratitude, the thanks of your professors, advisors, directors, coaches, mentors, all who work at Seattle U., including its deans, administration, and president for you, for the kind of students you are, for the kind of people you are, for your great spirit, generosity, service, talent and academic commitments. No university, no university, could be blessed by as good a group of students as we are by you. We thank you and we will miss you.

I'm excited about this, your commencement, because in addition to hearing from the student speaker from your class, we will award an honorary degree and hear from Steven Holl, the world-renowned architect, and the architect of what we think is his masterpiece, our own Chapel of St Ignatius. I am glad he is honored at your commencement and that you get to meet him.

His presence makes me think of how in these years you have fashioned your own intellectual architecture: the foundations, supports, shape, form, and beauty of your minds, how you think, how you learn, how you create; your intellectual architecture. But knowing you, I also know that in these years you have developed an architecture of feeling, an architecture of relationship, and an architecture of spirituality. Only Steven Holl could have designed the Chapel of St Ignatius, but equally, only you could have constructed the even more intricate and daring and beautiful edifice of your minds, hearts, and souls. Treasure what you have built, put it to use to welcome and serve others, simply enjoy the unique architecture of yourself, and like that famous chapel, may the temple you have built in these years at Seattle University be above all your place of praise and worship of your God.

Congratulations, thank you, and God bless you!