

## **BOWDOIN GRADUATION – 2022**

State Greeting by Laurie G. Lachance '83

President, Thomas College

Graduates, Families, Friends, Trustees, Faculty, and Staff, I bring you warm greetings and sincere congratulations from the Great State of Maine. It's been 39 years since I crossed this stage, and I am deeply honored and humbled to come before you today. As I look back at my own commencement, I realize that it was far less an ending and far more a beginning. You stand here today at the threshold, and you hold in your hands, heads, and hearts tremendous potential and opportunity. My prayer for you is that you'll use this great gift you've been given, a Bowdoin education, and you'll go forth like generations of Bowdoin graduates before you and truly make a difference in this world of ours.

As you examine the rich history of Maine and of Bowdoin College you quickly discover that the two entities are inextricably linked. The roots of Bowdoin are deeply planted in the soils of Maine and what has taken root, grown, and blossomed in this very place is tremendous leadership capacity for Maine and for the nation. 1 President, 1 Chief Justice, 7 US Ambassadors, 43 Congressmen, 16 US Senators, 11 Maine Governors, 24 Maine House Speakers and 24 Maine Senate Presidents. And this doesn't begin to touch on the contribution of thousands of business, medical, legal, nonprofit, and academic leaders who attended this fine institution. Together, their bold and visionary leadership has shaped the unique character and heritage of Maine for over two centuries and played a hand in shaping our nation as well. What an awesome thought – and what fun to look across these 450 faces and wonder who will rise to fill these shoes going forward.

Over the past 4 years, you have received some very special gifts from Bowdoin – gifts that will provide a foundation on which you can build a fulfilling life and a meaningful career. Bowdoin has given you a solid education. You've been challenged in the ways of the mind – learning to think, how to analyze, how to approach and solve problems, gaining expertise in your field of study. Knowledge and skills that will serve you well no matter where you go from here.

As you depart from Bowdoin and either continue your education or enter your work life, I hope you will also take with you the precious gifts of Maine. Let me explain.

For the last 4 years, you've lived with or among Maine's people. When I describe the people of Maine, four phrases come to mind: Integrity, Humility, Hard Work, and a Can-Do Attitude! These are the gifts of Maine. These attributes were created and honed over the centuries by working the farmlands of central and northern Maine, by stewarding and harvesting our vast and valuable forests, and by fishing our rugged coastline. Then came the manufacturing era –

when nearly 50% of our people were working in mills that grew up on the banks of our rivers – producing textiles, shoes, furniture, paper and so much more.

Mainers have always been a productive people. Now we've risen to the challenges of serving a knowledge-based, technology-driven global economy, and are the home of genetics research, finance and insurance powerhouses, medical research and product development, microchips, biofuels and composite building materials. Specialty foods and most recently – some of the nation's best craft beers! Drawing from our unique heritage and pristine environment to create the products of the future. These are the industries that shaped our culture, honed our attributes. These are the gifts of Maine that I hope you have received in some form during your time at Bowdoin.

1. Integrity: your greatest career and life asset – bar none.
2. Humility: Be grateful for every success in life and realize that you likely didn't get there without help from others.
3. Hard Work: You should always take your job seriously but don't take yourself too seriously. When you accept a job, it is a contract of sorts in which you promise to do your best. You owe them that.
4. Can-Do Attitude: Embrace every challenge and make it an opportunity! Believe in yourself and your colleagues and you'll be amazed by what you can accomplish!

And so, my friends, I'll end with this thought. You are now part of a mighty tradition. Your Bowdoin education will open doors for you, and it will take you places you may not have dreamed possible. Live fully and give fully. For those of you staying in Maine, welcome. You will, undoubtedly, make your mark on this great state. For those who will leave our fine state to explore opportunities elsewhere, remember this: you are now a part of Maine history, and wherever life leads you, please know that you can always come home to Maine.