

REMARKS FROM DEAN MARK RICHARDSON
OHSU School of Medicine
2012 Hooding & Commencement Ceremony
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

Thank you for the kind introduction.

To our graduates, congratulations!

I speak from experience when I say this is a day you will remember. It is a real capstone to all the hours of education and effort over a significant portion of your lives.

To our guests – family, friends and colleagues – welcome.

All of you played an important role in helping our graduates arrive at this moment. I know they are grateful your support and guidance. This is a celebration for you as well.

Today's ceremony honors the dedication of our graduates in their shared goal of improving human health.

In all, 533 degrees will be conferred today. That is a record number for the School of Medicine.

Each single degree represents an individual **story** of hard work, tenacity and achievement.

Each story is also a work in progress with much still unwritten, many blank pages to fill and many future exciting chapters.

But what would any story be without a little mystery and some twists and turns along the way? After all, the journey can't be simple and straight, or we all lose interest!

Graduates: Without a doubt, you enter your chosen profession at a time of dramatic change and a good deal of mystery. We don't know how this particular book will turn out.

We do know that as changes in health care become a reality, our systems of care will change.

New models of delivery, like the Coordinated Care Organizations now getting underway in Oregon, and the Tricounty Medicaid Collaborative have the chance to lead the nation in how we provide health to a population.

Information technology will change how physicians and health care professionals interact with patients.

The I-phone diagnosis is already here!

Advances in research hold the promise of understanding our genetic profile and individualized responses to drugs and nutrition.

This convergence has set the stage for a dramatic shift in health care delivery, how research is conducted, and how education is delivered.

How many years did it take from the Gutenberg press to the Kindle?

Centuries.

It won't take centuries for health to see just as dramatic changes.

The story of health care in this country – your story – is a work in progress with many possible endings.

For today's graduates, however, there is a big question to ask: How does one approach a professional path when so much of the future is changing so quickly?

My advice: Stick to the basics, what you know, and recognize that the unexpected can and does happen.

Today, I have three basics I want to share with you.

The Basics Number 1: Be prepared.

Be prepared every day for the rest of your life.

This is harder than it sounds.

Our faculty, many of whom are here today, have shared their knowledge with you and given you the best education possible. I thank all of them.

Through your own hard work and their guidance, you graduate today very well prepared.

But the era in which we learn intensely in medical school and residency, post-doctoral or other post-graduate training – and then slow down once we leave these educational environments – that era is long gone.

In order to stay ahead of – or better yet, lead the coming change – you will need to spend the rest of your professional life acquiring new knowledge, nurturing your intellectual curiosity, and ensuring you are prepared for and participating in the emerging paradigms.

The Basics Number 2: Be happy.

This sounds pretty straightforward, but it's not.

You were selected to be part of the health care and discovery community because you are exceptional. And while many of you, if not most of you, will now embark on additional training for a time, at some point soon, you will have choices to make about your career.

Make the choices that give you professional satisfaction and allow you to stay connected to the reasons why you chose this professional path in the first place. We want you to stay in health care and science.

If you find you've made a wrong choice, or you are simply ready for a new opportunity, be courageous and make a change within the health care field, there are plenty of avenues.

The world needs you actively engaged in improving health outcomes.

You can be most effective if you are happy in your professional path.

And if the story you are writing isn't taking you where you want it to go, remember, you are the author can change the next chapter.

The Basics Number 3: Find your opportunity.

With significant change, extraordinary opportunities also arise.

These opportunities are ones which you can either seize, or create yourself, or they may pass you by as other people seize the day.

As I said earlier, the way we deliver health care will change, but no one knows how exactly. Not yet. There are hundreds, even thousands of possibilities. Create one of them.

This could be a new way to interact with a single patient or a new way to care for an entire community.

It could be helping to define the tools and techniques to utilize genetics more routinely in clinical practice.

It could be so many things. These chapters, yet unwritten, are numerous – endless really. And they are your chapters.

Keep focused on three basics:

One. Be prepared.

Two. Be happy.

Three. Find your opportunity and seize it.

I would say good luck, but I know you don't need it. You are ready to make the most of the future and help write a series of stories in which the final line could be something like this:

And they all lived healthily ever after.

Congratulations Class of 2012. We will be watching you with pride.