

Columbia University Commencement 2021

Transcript

Prelude (2:00)

A woman walks into the Rotunda of Low Library and turns to face the camera.

Onscreen text reads: "The Star-Spangled Banner," Francis Scott Key (1779–1843).

The woman begins to sing the National Anthem.

Woman singing: O say can you see.

Screen cuts to view of the New York City skyline during the day.

Woman singing: By the dawn's early light.

Screen pans to Central Park.

Onscreen text reads: Vocal performance by Grace Victoria D'Haiti, Barnard College, 2021.

Screen pans over the Manhattan skyline, the Empire State Building, cuts to the skyline at night.

D'Haiti singing: What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming.

Screen cuts to Columbia's Morningside campus, panning over *The Thinker* and other sculptures.

D'Haiti singing: Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight.

Screen cuts to Columbia school of Social Work, Earl Hall, Columbia Business School, the Medical Center campus, and the Gary C. Comer Building at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

D'Haiti singing: O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?

Screen cuts to a mural of a healthcare worker with a stethoscope and wearing a mask, and the words Thank You, By M. Tony Peralta, Assistant @Art Mandan.

D'Haiti singing: And the rocket's red glare.

Screen cuts to the Waterlicht art exhibit at the Lenfest Center for the Arts.

D'Haiti singing: The bombs bursting in air.

Screen cuts to the lawns in front of Butler Library on a warm day, then fades to the steps of Low Library.

D'Haiti singing: Gave proof through the night.

Screen cuts to Robert K. Kraft Field at Lawrence A. Wien Stadium, Baker Athletics Complex

D'Haiti singing: That our flag was still there.

Screen cuts to an American flag atop a building at Columbia University Medical Center, the Hudson River in the background.

D'Haiti singing: O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave.

Screen cuts to several scenes in succession: three women attending a Zoom meeting, a lecturer conducting a hybrid learning class, a video of a professor lecturing on a laptop, masked students watching a professor draw a diagram on a chalkboard, people talking over Zoom, Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger speaking at a World Leaders Forum.

D'Haiti singing: O'er the land of the free.

Screen cuts to a banner hanging over the entrance to College Walk that reads Columbia University, Congratulations to the Class of 2021.

D'Haiti: And the home of the brave.

Screen cuts to D'Haiti standing in the center of the Rotunda of Low Library.

Screen cuts to a closeup of the dome of St. Paul's Chapel and zooms out.

Church bells ring.

Procession (4:11)

Screen cuts to three women wearing academic robes standing at the entrance to Low Library.

Onscreen text reads: Melanie J. Bernitz, Senior Vice President for Columbia Health, Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine; Donna Lynne, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Columbia University Irving Medical Center, Chief Executive Officer of ColumbiaDoctors, University COVID Director; Wafaa El-Sadr, University Professor and Dr. Mathilde Krim-amfAR Chair of Global Health, Director of Columbia World Projects, Founder and Director of ICAP.

Music plays: *Pomp and Circumstance* by Sir Edward Elgar.

The women, Dr. Lynne in the middle holding the University Mace, descend the steps of Low Library in unison.

Screen cuts to a closeup of *Alma Mater* statue.

On screen text reads: Representing all healthcare and essential workers keeping our community safe, healthy, and operational.

Screen cuts to Bernitz, Lynne, and El-Sadr reaching the landing in front of *Alma Mater*, where Lynne places the Mace onto a stand on a wooden table. The women step off-camera, and the camera pans right to a podium engraved with Columbia University in the City of New York. A second table topped with scrolls sits on the right side of the podium.

Commencement Address Part 1 (5:07)

Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger approaches the podium, wearing academic robes, and dons reading glasses.

Onscreen text reads: Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University.

Bollinger speaks: We come together today, virtually, of course, to recognize your extraordinary achievement—graduation from a college or school of Columbia University and membership in the Class of 2021—an achievement made all the more worthy of admiration and celebration by these extraordinary times. Commencement is always an amalgam of the familiar and the singular. There is ceremony and ritual repeated year after year, connecting us to generations of Columbians stretching long into the past. But it also brings us to a higher elevation than ordinary life and allows us to see better into the future. Poised at this moment, however, this rite of passage contains the thousands of unique and personal stories of determination and exploration, of growth and self-discovery, of knowledge and expertise—your stories, in other words.

On behalf of the entire University, I offer our warmest congratulations. If we were assembling in-person, this would be the moment when I would offer the graduates the opportunity to thank their parents, families, spouses, and loved ones, since no one arrives at this moment without their backing. Assembling virtually, we have the possible advantage of being able to do this not by distant applause but by actual hugs. I, therefore, give you this moment to be together.

Let me begin by saying something about the times we are in.

Who among us does not feel unmoored? The flow of events, their scale and strangeness and sheer volume, posing one or another personal and societal challenge of obvious urgency, is overwhelming, and that is an understatement. It has been a searing experience for us all to be alive at this time, an incomprehensible mix of momentous change, wearing monotony, unfamiliar hardships, and, at times, inescapable sadness. Just focusing the mind becomes a challenge.

And yet nothing can be more important right now than developing the power of intellect, which is the reason we came together here, at Columbia, as members of this unique community, for this period of time. Never has society more desperately needed to reap the benefits of science,

newly discovered knowledge, and the pursuit of truth. How otherwise can we possibly pretend to be sufficiently equipped to comprehend and to come to terms with the world to which we now bear witness?

Just think about it: A pandemic that has spared no one. A crisis of democracy that is testing the viability of civic society. A racial reckoning that we must confront with the full force of our collective consciousness. The impact of potentially catastrophic changes in our climate, already felt incessantly. And perhaps most sobering of all, the collapse of norms in intellectual and public life—the very mechanisms that we as a society rely upon to solve problems and drive progress.

In all my life, I have never seen anything like our current difficulties. I graduated from college in 1968, and Jean and I came to Columbia in that year. We all know the turbulence of that period—the political movements, the disruptions, the instabilities, and the dangers to the country. Everyone understood we were in the midst of a once-in-a-century upheaval—the type of turmoil that is often essential for real change to happen.

But this is of a different order. So much of what we take for granted as basic conditions of life have been upturned. My own field of free speech is a prime example. A central premise of free speech, ever since the Enlightenment, has been that wide-open, public debate may produce bad and harmful speech, including falsehoods, lies, deceptions, and bigotry, but that the best and most effective remedy for this is to trust in good speech to answer and triumph. But now technology, especially in the form of social media, has called into question that optimism. Concerns over the exponential increase in bad speech and in the ways people communicate cast a shadow of doubt over a premise that has guided us for over two hundred years.

So, this has been our, your, new reality. Any one of these crises would have been plenty to deal with. All of them intersecting and occurring at once has displaced the world as we know it.

Commencement Address Part 2 (11:05)

And, so, I begin by acknowledging what you have lived through as a student at Columbia.

Now, while it is important to understand and recognize how difficult this period of time has been for you, it is also the right moment to express our gratitude for universities, to Columbia, in particular, and to the remarkable people who comprise our community and who make such important contributions to helping the world overcome just the sort of challenges we face today.

I like to say, and do so frequently, that no rational process would lead to the design of a modern university. If that wasn't clear enough fourteen months ago, today it borders on a cliché. As organizations, universities are as complex a structure as it gets.

And, yet, they have survived and thrived over the decades and centuries.

As if by some magical force, universities nurture and take advantage of the human desire to know, to understand, and to share and make good that knowledge. Every day our lives are sustained and undergirded by discoveries from the academy. Consider the past year. Vaccines followed experiments unlocking the basic elements of life. Guides for surviving a pandemic followed a century of study and preparations by public health experts. Treatments for viruses and other diseases were invented in academic medical centers and shared with the world. All the while, we have watched with enormous admiration and respect as, month after exhausting month, Columbia's nurses, doctors, healthcare, and social workers persevere, selflessly devoting themselves to caring for the sick and those in need. They have waged a titanic effort to save lives and to support the most vulnerable among us, and they have earned our everlasting gratitude.

There are still other areas of challenge where universities demonstrate their uncommon worth. For example: The realities of climate change have been documented by earth scientists (beginning, I have to say, at Columbia University and our Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory), and responses have been imagined by social scientists and scholarly engineers. The conditions of democracy, including the principles of equality and freedom of speech and press, have been elucidated by legal scholars, political scientists, and journalism professors. And, most importantly, the faculty in the humanities and the arts have helped us know who we are, how to live, and what to live for, especially when times are hard.

Universities have stood as beacons of respect for truth, of reason and civility in the pursuit of truth, and of the idea that a good life can only rest on a foundation of these principles.

Let us, therefore, take this moment to celebrate Columbia and all of our colleagues in universities all across the world.

Commencement Address Part 3 (14:55)

Now, I want to say a few words about you—about being a student and graduating at this particular moment. There is no getting around the fact that this has been an astoundingly difficult period in which to be a student, and you have suffered. Yet, it is also true that you have endured and responded to these challenges. Much of life is anticipating and preparing for adversity. Often we have only a vague sense of what it might be like. To have struggled through, and ultimately overcome adversity on this scale is, in a way, an educational miracle. Extremes in life are no longer abstractions to you. You have met them, learned about life, and succeeded where you could.

As students, you know that we learn both by study and by experience. In both, we learn best in cases of extremes. What we study is most often fashioned in the context of extremes. Shakespeare's plays (one example of many I could give) are not about usual times; they are about crises. And so it is across the intellectual spectrum, whether in the study of disease or of legal cases. In extremes, human nature and life are fully revealed, everything is more vivid and

clear. Little is left to the imagination because what we need to know is right there before us to grasp, to absorb, and to comprehend.

In law, there is a famous saying that “hard cases make bad law.” With law, as with life, we seek stability, and, when things are hard, they are complex and difficult to resolve in our minds. Hence, law from hard cases is inherently unstable. But life is different. We need and want to understand everything in its full complexity. That is the central and defining ambition of a university: to be able to hold everything, even ideas that are contradictory, in your mind simultaneously. When you are learning in times of extremes, that is what you get. So, hard cases may make bad law, but hard times make sharp minds.

All your life you will draw upon and learn from the experiences you have just had. The period of time around 1968 was revolutionary in many respects, like today. I cannot tell you how many times I have said, “I graduated from college and came to Columbia in 1968,” and that statement reflects my sense of having been part of meaningful and historic experiences. I am sure you will do the same, saying, “I graduated from Columbia in 2021,” and, you, and everyone else, will know what that means. It is profound.

It will, to be sure, take time for the meaning and significance of this experience to reveal itself. Give it time, be patient, and let the power of reflection and enlightenment take hold.

We as an institution must do the same. Just as the Columbia Class of 2021 will become a singular identity for all of you, you as a class will leave your unique mark on us, as well. With the power of reflection and enlightenment, Columbia and all of us attached to it will adapt, evolve, and grow. And your place in our history will forever be sacrosanct.

Thank you, and congratulations to you, the Class of 2021.

Musical Interlude (19:23)

Screen cuts to D’Haiti standing in the center of the Low Library Rotunda.

Onscreen text reads: *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938) and John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954).

D’Haiti sings: Lift ev’ry voice and sing, ‘til earth and heaven ring; ring with the harmonies of liberty; let our rejoicing rise, high as the list’ning skies, let it resound, loud as the rolling sea. Sing a song, full of the faith that the dark past has taught us; sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us. Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on, ‘til victory is won.

Screen cuts to various scenes in succession: two women wearing masks and T-shirts that read Columbia Black student nurses and that feature four fists of various skin tones raised in unison; a mural that reads no justice no peace, Black and Indigenous lives matter, BLM, say their names; keep the moment alive; love one another, respect life, and other messages; a Black Lives Matter

sign hanging in the window of the Jerome I. Greene Science Center; a Zoom gallery of people holding up handmade signs; two men wearing protective masks bumping elbows; healthcare workers gathering bottles of hands sanitizer; Jelanie Cobb and Jay-Z talk on stage; D'Haiti sways with eyes closed as she sings; five masked people prepare dozens of sandwiches in a commercial kitchen; a woman wearing a Columbia hoodie holds up sticker that reads I Voted; a Time magazine cover that reads We are not silent, confronting America's legacy of anti-Asian violence; a man wearing a T-shirt that reads Black lives matter walks two dogs on leashes across College Walk; D'Haiti sways as she sings; a Zoom gallery of five women singing in synch with D'Haiti; three women holding up a sign that reads Racism is a public health crisis; several people hold up signs that read We support our Asian and Asian American colleagues; a sign reads End the violence against Asians; a sign reads Let's stand together for justice peacefully; a sign reads Black trans lives matter; a sign reads Be hopeful.

Screen cuts to black background with an illustration of half a lion head and the words We roar together.

Preparing for Commencement (21:13)

Screen cuts to a woman holding a piece of clear glass shaped like an apple with a stem.

Onscreen text reads: Alma Mater-Stand, Columbia! by Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809), Text by Gilbert Oakley Ward, Columbia College, 1902

Chorus sings: Mother, stay'd on rock eternal.

The woman is sitting in an otherwise-empty lecture hall. She stands, picks up a tote bag, and begins to descend the steps of the lecture hall seating.

Chorus sings: Crown'd and set upon a height.

Onscreen text reads: Vocal performance by the Columbia Cliffhangers featuring the Columbia University Glee Club (1952 archival recording) and Dunia Albertine Habboosh, Columbia College, 2021

Chorus sings: Glorified by Light supernal, In thy radiance we see light.

The woman reaches a desk at the bottom of the stairs and places the glass apple on the desk.

Screen cuts to the Butler Library Reading room, and the woman walks into the room. Taking a seat at a table, she begins to write thank-you notes.

Chorus sings: Torch thy children's lamps to kindle, Beacon-star to cheer and guide. Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater, Through the storms of Time abide!

Screen cuts to a closeup of a Columbia cap and gown hanging in the reading room. The woman puts on the cap and gown.

Chorus sings: Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater, Through the storms of Time abide!

Screen cuts to the woman throwing open the front doors of Butler Library and stepping out into the sunshine.

Chorus sings: Honor, love, and veneration.

Screen cuts to nine members of the Columbia Cliffhangers sitting six feet apart on the steps of Low Library, singing.

Cliffhangers sing: Crown forevermore thy brow!

Screen cuts to four members of the Columbia Cliffhangers sitting and standing on a bench in front of Butler Library, singing; then six members singing in the gazebo in Van Am Quad. Cut to the student in cap and gown walking around the Morningside campus; she places a card reading Thank You, Lions on the statue in front of Havemeyer Hall. She returns to Low Library, joined by the Cliffhangers. She sits at the base of Alma Mater and opens a laptop displaying a video of Interim Provost Ira Katznelson wearing academic robes.

Cliffhangers sing: Many a grateful generation, Hail thee as we hail thee now! Till the lordly Hudson seaward, Cease to roll his heaving tide. Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater, Through the storms of Time abide! Stand, Columbia! Alma Mater, Through the storms of Time abide!

Conferring of Degrees in Course (23:11)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes, sitting in a light-filled home library.

Onscreen text reads: Ira Katznelson, Interim Provost of Columbia University

Katznelson speaks: It's my distinct honor to present the administrative leaders of the various divisions of the University. They will, in turn, introduce candidates for degrees in their respective groups. These academic leaders have pursued our highest goals for pedagogy and scholarship with creativity, determination, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

I am pleased to recognize each school and the outstanding accomplishments of their students. We celebrate each graduate with enormous pride. Thus, it is a special pleasure to now give the floor to the Deans of Columbia University.

Columbia College (23:56)

Screen cuts to man wearing academic robes, standing in Van Am Quad.

Onscreen text reads: James J. Valentini, Dean of Columbia College, Vice President for Undergraduate Education

Valentini speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Columbia College have completed all of the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degree of bachelor of arts. But satisfying those most demanding requirements, is only one of their accomplishments. These students have shown unflagging persistence in adapting to unpredictability and in responding to constant change. Wherever they were forced by circumstance to be, whatever their separation in space or time, however remote their classrooms, they committed themselves to their academic endeavors with enthusiasm undiminished. They never lost connection to Columbia, even when their Zoom connection failed. They lived the lessons of the Core Curriculum, their unique intellectual heritage, finding opportunity in adversity, building community in unprecedented ways and contributing to their world as never before. There is no doubt of their achievement of the Core Competencies of creativity, imagination, resilience, civic and individual responsibility, teamwork and collaboration and global awareness. They used these competencies to help solve the challenges of the moment, as I am confident they will do to solve the challenges that lie ahead. These graduates will bring immense honor and wide recognition to Columbia in all that they do. Please grant them this degree along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Valentini places a scroll tied with a white ribbon on a clear glass plate engraved with the University logo, which features a crown and the words Columbia University in the City of New York.

The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (25:31)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes standing in the Rotunda of Low Library.

Onscreen text reads: Mary C. Boyce, Dean of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science.

Boyce speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science have completed the requirements prescribed by that Faculty for the degrees of bachelor of science, master of philosophy, master of science, professional degree, doctor of engineering science, and doctor of philosophy.

Here in New York City, across the country, and around the world, they are bringing the Columbia Engineering for Humanity vision to life.

Though physically remote, they are united in Columbia spirit. Through a challenging year, they have risen to the occasion.

With their experience, their tenacity, their imagination, and their actions, they will help build a more sustainable, healthy, secure, connected, and creative world.

These individuals have each been uniquely amplified by their Columbia Experience—they are creating new materials and devices, designing and building robots, developing new microscopes and models to better understand our world, inventing processes to store energy and clean water, and discovering novel ways to heal disease and repair our bodies, they are making our online and offline realms safer and more secure, and creating new virtual worlds while expanding the limits of our own.

With their spirits lifted up and their hammers held high (Boyce raises a plastic, air-filled hammer)—this Class of 2021 is: electrically energized, biomedically inspired, chemically synthesized, computationally tractable, algorithmically advanced, civilly engaged, structurally sound, mathematically inclined, financially informed, industrially applied, operationally ethical, mechanically precise, environmentally aware, physically charged, and virtually indestructible.

They are ready to SEAS the World!

Please grant them these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Boyce places a scroll tied with an orange ribbon on a clear glass plate.

Barnard College (27:52)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes standing in front of a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows.

Onscreen text reads: Sian Leah Beilock, President of Barnard College.

Beilock speaks: President Bollinger, it is my honor and my pleasure to present to you the brilliant, resilient, limitlessly intelligent, intellectually adventurous, and exceedingly compassionate Barnard College Class of 2021.

During an extraordinary four years, these students have met the challenges of college life and prevailed. They have led as activists and mentors; created and performed; earned honors and prestige; produced original research; and enhanced social discourse. They have excelled as scholars and citizens of the world. Unfailingly, their grace shined and their perseverance inspired.

And they have done all this while creating a community of care, supporting one another with characteristic spirit.

Their lives will now go in many directions, but I can assure you—at a time when the world desperately needs their rigorous thinking, their creativity, their courage and their compassion—they are prepared to deliver, and to confront whatever lies ahead.

Mr. President, our Barnard graduates are ready to go out and change the world.

These students have completed the requirements prescribed by the faculty of Barnard College for the degree of bachelor of arts. I ask that you grant them this degree along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Beilock places a scroll tied with a white ribbon on a clear glass plate.

School of General Studies (29:15)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in front of Lewisohn Hall, holding a sculpture of an owl.

Onscreen text reads: Lisa Rosen-Metsch, Dean of the School of General Studies.

Rosen-Metsch speaks: Mr. President, standing here in front of Lewisohn Hall in these extraordinary times, I am deeply honored to present to you the highly accomplished candidates of the Columbia University School of General Studies Class of 2021. These candidates hail from over fifty-seven countries; we are so proud that the class of 2021 is comprised of 108 veterans of the U.S. Armed Services—one of the largest cohorts ever to graduate at an Ivy League University since World War II. Our GSers are simply amazing—with backgrounds in ballet and now biology, going from the Navy to neuroscience, from the runway to Russian literature, from the Marines to mathematics, from Broadway to business, and from community college to comparative politics. We have candidates from our innovative dual-degree programs with Sciences Po, the City University of Hong Kong, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. We have parents and students who have excelled in the face of adversity and many of these students are the first in their families to go to college. Our GS students follow a diverse and often nonlinear path, complement life experience with intellectual abilities, and make Columbia truly unique and the Columbia undergraduate classroom like no other.

Mr. President, these candidates have completed the requirements as prescribed by their faculty for the degree of bachelor of arts. As the first alumna-dean of this exceptional school, I implore you, sir, that you grant them this degree along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Thank you.

Rosen-Metsch places a scroll tied with a white ribbon on a clear glass plate.

School of Professional Studies (31:23)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes, standing in front of Lewisohn Hall, holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Troy J. Eggers, Interim Dean of the School of Professional Studies.

Eggers speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Professional Studies have completed the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degree of master of science. These candidates are leaders of influence, agents of change, entrepreneurs in business and spirit, global in outreach and impact, all poised to change the world through excellence in their professions. They have collaborated across time zones, completed their degrees from kitchen tables around the world, and we cannot wait to welcome them to New York City to celebrate their accomplishments.

Please grant them this degree along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Eggers lays the scroll tied with a yellow ribbon on a clear glass plate.

School of the Arts (32:07)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in a light-filled lobby of floor-to-ceiling windows.

Onscreen text reads: Carol Becker, Dean of the School of the Arts.

Becker speaks: Mr. President, I present to you the deeply talented candidates of the Faculty of the School of the Arts. They have completed all the requirements prescribed for the degrees of master of arts and master of fine arts. These artists have fortitude, and they will triumph in this very upended world. Mr. President, has there ever been a time when art and culture and the joy they bring, have been more needed by society than now? So, I beseech you Mr. President, let these candidates go, and grant them their degrees, with all the rights and privileges hereto attached.

Becker places a scroll tied with a brown ribbon on a clear glass plate engraved with the University logo, which features a crown and the words Columbia University in the City of New York.

School of International and Public Affairs (32:55)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in an empty room, the city skyline visible behind her.

Onscreen text reads: Merit E. Janow, Dean of the School of International and Public Affairs.

Janow speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of International and Public Affairs have completed the requirements prescribed by the Faculty for the degrees of master of international affairs and master of public administration.

This has been a challenging period for the world and for the more than six hundred members of SIPA's Class of 2021, coming from all over the United States and seventy countries.

Their lives have changed dramatically during their time at SIPA. So many have had to deal with dislocations and strains unimaginable when they joined us so joyously a couple of years ago.

Yet I want you to know three things about our graduates and our shared experience:

First, ours is the most global school of public policy and during this period our students have learned how interconnected the world is, how important it is for societies to develop sound and inclusive public policies that advance citizen health, support economic vitality, maintain peace and security, and protect and enhance our environment.

Second, throughout this period our students have met every obstacle with resilience, agility and creativity—never allowing the difficulties to thwart their ability to engage with each other deeply through online and hybrid instruction, through intensive online convening and consultation, and working together on projects with local and global institutions and communities.

And third, our graduates are committed to professional lives infused with public purpose. And I believe these years have strengthened that sense of purpose and equipped them with the intellectual tools and enhanced personal attributes needed to make a difference. Today, as they prepare to leave SIPA and Columbia University, they stand ready to contribute to a better world. They will be embarking on careers across the public, private and nonprofit sectors as local and national government officials, as politicians, corporate leaders, as public officials in international organizations, as entrepreneurs, NGO leaders, and so much more. We are so proud of them and all that they have and will accomplish. The world needs their drive, their sense of mission and humanity, their expertise.

Please grant them these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Janow places a scroll tied with a pale blue ribbon on a clear glass plate engraved with the University logo, which features a crown and the words Columbia University in the City of New York.

School of Social Work (35:52)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in an ornate room, holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Melissa Begg, Dean of the School of Social Work.

Begg speaks: Mr. President, it is my great honor to present to you the newest graduates of the oldest school of social work in the country. They are advocates, agitators, and activists, working shoulder to shoulder with the most vulnerable among us. They have a vision for the future in which equity and human dignity are paramount—and they stand ready to make that vision a reality.

I wish to honor this outstanding group of social workers, these champions of social justice, borrowing from a great songwriter:

Though you always do for others; Though your song may be unsung; I know you'll build a ladder to the stars, And climb on every rung.

Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Social Work have completed the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degree of master of science. Please grant them this degree along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Begg places a scroll tied with a yellow ribbon on a clear glass plate.

College of Dental Medicine (36:55)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes, seated in a lecture hall, holding two scrolls.

Onscreen text reads: Christian S. Stohler, Dean of the College of Dental Medicine.

Stohler speaks: Mr. President, candidates of the 2021 graduating class did not shy away from treating patients in the midst of a pandemic that posed serious personal risks to them. They have proven to be resilient, helping to invent and adapt to a workplace that needed to be reconfigured in major ways.

When it comes to biohazards, infection control, and personal protective equipment, Mr. President, members of the Class of 2021 are epigenetically modified by our faculty to exceed in meeting all applicable safety standards, having passed random inspections by the city's health department with flying colors.

These gifted men and women are exceedingly competent to treat mankind's first and eleventh most prevalent non-communicable diseases that have bearing on many health conditions in other parts of the human body.

They know all there is to know about pain, can manage it without reliance on opioid prescriptions, and feel secretly guilty when inflicting pain with their nasty, exquisitely sharp toys.

The Faculty of the College of Dental Medicine advised me that they no longer can keep up with their tempo and begged me to persuade you, Mr. President, to release them into the wild without any further delay.

In agreement with the recommendation of the Faculty of the College of Dental Medicine, I request, Mr. President, that you confer upon these environmentally tested men and women the degrees doctor of dental surgery and master of science in recognition of their solid completion of all requirements.

Stohler places two scrolls tied with pale purple ribbons on a clear glass plate.

Columbia Business School (39:00)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes standing in a wood-paneled room, holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Costis Maglaras, Dean of Columbia Business School.

Maglaras speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Business have completed the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degrees of master of business administration and master of science.

In the short, but eventful and disruptive, period of the past year and a half, our graduates innovated, engaged and excelled. They became entrepreneurs, starting over forty companies including a carbon neutral clean beauty brand, a web-based career advancement platform, and a marketplace for under-represented minority-owned businesses.

They were socially minded and worked with over twenty nonprofit organizations including Harlem Chamber Players, the Jericho Project, Fortune Society, and Hour Children.

They were engaged members of our local community, serving as counselors who provided financial, operational, and marketing advice to numerous companies in Morningside Heights and West Harlem, including Bottomline Construction, Go!Go!Curry, and Black Widow Pest Control.

And most importantly in this past year, they preserved our strong sense of community by organizing over seven hundred and eighty events—both virtual and in-person—from wine tastings, game nights, home workouts, and meditation sessions.

Congratulations, graduates, you made it!

Mr. President, please grant them these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Maglaras places a scroll tied with a beige ribbon on a clear glass plate engraved with the University logo, which features a crown and the words Columbia University in the City of New York.

Graduate School of Journalism (40:29)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes, standing in front of a stained glass mural, holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Stephen W. Coll, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism.

Coll speaks: Mr. President, it is hard to recall a time when reliable journalism has been more important to the common good. During this miserable pandemic, journalists have thrown light on the dark corners of our public square. They have insisted that our elected leaders face scientific facts and answer for their shortcomings to the public.

To the extraordinary professional reporters working in difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions to keep us all reliably informed, I can offer more than one hundred and fifty talented and dedicated reinforcements: the Graduate School of Journalism's Class of 2021.

They have spent a hard, disrupted year on the streets of New York, in public parks, in plazas, at protests—anywhere they could cover the news or dig deeper while keeping themselves and the people they report on safe. They came to class in person. They followed public health rules—almost all the time. They took care of one another and found their way through a tough winter. Along the way they internalized the highest values of their profession— independence, fairness, persistence, and a commitment to the public interest.

They have also expanded their vocabulary, as they know now that a slug is not only a mollusk. That a budget is not only a fiscal plan. That 30-30-30 is not only 90. And that it is better to be right than first.

And so, Mr. President, in light of their great reliability, I request that you grant these candidates the masters and doctoral degrees they have earned, along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Coll places a scroll tied with a red ribbon on a clear glass plate.

Teachers College (42:12)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes, standing beneath ornate archways, holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Thomas R. Bailey, President of Teachers College.

Bailey speaks: President Bollinger, I am proud to present the following candidates who have completed the requirements prescribed by that Faculty of Teachers College for the degrees of master of arts, master of education, master of science, and doctor of education. This group is a phenomenal array of freshly minted teachers, speech therapists, neuroscientists, technology developers, psychologists, choral directors, community health researchers, artists, economists, nutrition policy experts, nurse executives, and conflict negotiators. Yesterday evening, I had the privilege of presiding over a global celebration of these great future scholars and leaders, whose knowledge, skill, and commitment to building a smarter, healthier, more equitable and just world are needed now more than ever. Please grant them their degrees, along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Bailey places a scroll tied with a pale blue ribbon on a clear glass plate engraved with the University logo, which features a crown and the words Columbia University in the City of New York.

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (43:17)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in front of Avery Hall and holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Amale Andraos, Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

Andraos speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation have completed the requirements prescribed by that Faculty for the degrees of master of architecture and master of science.

In this historical time of both profound rupture and tremendous momentum, our students have already affirmed that change is here. They are the change that we have been longing for: an unstoppable, powerful, and inspiring wave that is recasting the foundations from which we can all together imagine, design and build a more equitable, sustainable and creative future shared across our shared planet.

These students are at once visionary and grounded, scholarly and engaged, digital wizards and makers extraordinaire. They are artists and activists, theorists and practitioners, dreamers and builders. Their extraordinary skills render visible the invisible, drawing worlds together to reinvent our lives across all of the scales of the built environment. Their inspiring resilience gives us strength, their perseverance gives us willful optimism, and their incisive intelligence gives us clarity of purpose.

Please, Mr. President, let change unfurl and grant our students these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Andraos places a scroll tied with a red ribbon on a clear glass plate.

Columbia Law School (44:42)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in the lobby of Jerome Greene Hall of Avery Hall, holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Gillian Lester, Dean of Columbia Law School.

Lester speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Law have completed the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degrees of juris doctor, master of laws, and doctor of the science of law.

As law students, they have learned that justice must be blind—administered impartially and without favor. But now, as they prepare to assume their legal vocation, they do so with eyes wide open.

They know that law is a powerful tool in our complex world, but that it is only as wise as those who wield it. And these graduates—who will wield it—are wise. They are leaders and innovators. They are empathic. And they are fighters, who carry on, persistent in the face of adversity.

Here today, in the shadow of Alma Mater, we welcome these graduates with open arms into the global community of Columbia alumni, ready to follow in the footsteps of the generations of leaders-in-law who have come before them.

I therefore beg that you please grant them these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Congratulations graduates!

Lester places a scroll tied with a purple ribbon on a clear glass plate.

Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons (46:03)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes, standing in front of a staircase and holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Anil K. Rustgi, Interim Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine.

Rustgi speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Medicine have completed the requirements prescribed by that Faculty for the degrees of doctor of medicine, doctor of physical therapy, doctor of occupational therapy, master of science, master of science in human nutrition, and master of science in genetic counseling.

We welcome these new healers into the health professions, including our first eleven students to receive genetic counseling degrees. The women and men graduating today are poised to help us improve health by taking excellent care of their patients, making groundbreaking discoveries that advance care, teaching future generations, and advocating for equity and justice because health is a fundamental human right. Please grant them these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Rustgi places a scroll tied with a green ribbon on a clear glass plate.

School of Nursing (46:59)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing in front of a painting.

Onscreen text reads: Lorraine Frazier, Dean of the School of Nursing.

Frazier speaks: Mr. President, the candidates of the Faculty of Nursing have completed the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degrees of master of science, doctor of nursing practice, and doctor of philosophy. They are the newest Columbia members of the country's most trusted profession. For the past nineteen years, nursing has been ranked by the American public as the number one most ethical and honest profession in this country. Our graduates will now join this profession and will impact the future health of this nation as expert practitioners, superb scholars and researchers, and excellent educators. Please grant them these degrees along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Frazier holds up a scroll tied with a peach-colored ribbon.

Mailman School of Public Health (47:45)

Screen cuts to a woman wearing academic robes, standing outside and holding a scroll.

Onscreen text reads: Linda P. Fried, Dean of the Mailman School of Public Health.

Fried speaks: Mr. President, before you stand the world's future leaders for the public's health. Socially committed. Relentlessly global and locally grounded. Politically astute. Pandemic-capable, with the knowledge to create healthy populations. They are diverse, kind, and stupendously brilliant candidates of the Mailman School of Public Health.

Sir, these candidates, hailing from countries across the globe, should not be detained from their noble mission of improving health and preventing disease throughout the world. Our world needs them!

They have completed the requirements prescribed by their faculty for the degrees of master of health administration, master of public health, master of science, and doctor of public health.

I beseech you, sir, to grant them these degrees along with the rights and responsibilities thereto attached.

Fried places a scroll tied with a pale orange ribbon on a clear glass plate.

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (49:00)

Screen cuts to a man wearing academic robes standing in a wood-paneled room.

Onscreen text reads: Carlos J. Alonso, Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Alonso speaks: Mr. President, before you stand the candidates of the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences who have completed the requirements prescribed by that faculty for the degrees of master of arts, master of philosophy, doctor of philosophy, and doctor of musical arts. Some of them have been toiling and disciplining themselves for many years in order to reach this day, in which they will be granted the highest degree offered by this world-renowned house of learning over which you preside.

On the way here, they have discovered that they are doctors, but do not heal; that they are masters, but with no servant; and that instead of the musical arts, some of them have been tempted to use the arts of the occult to finish their dissertations. But finish they have, sir, to their great joy and to the even greater relief of their relatives and friends, who never could understand that the fate of the universe does in fact hinge on finding the precise adjective to crown that perfect sentence, or on running that last experiment when everyone else had retired for the night. Whoever said, "A scholar's work is never done," didn't know the half of it.

But it is also my decanal duty to elicit your sympathy for them, because of what they have endured to get to this glorious day. At every family gathering, they have had to contend repeatedly with difficult questions, such as: "Will you *ever* be done with that thesis?" Or, "What are you going to do with a degree in *that*?" And they have also been reminded by their relatives on several occasions, that their cousin Joey is a *real doctor*, and *he* finished in just four years.

For all of the above, I beseech you, Mr. President, to give them and their families occasion to rejoice, by granting them these degrees, along with the rights and privileges thereto attached.

Alonso places a scroll tied with an orange ribbon on a clear glass plate.

Degree Conferral (51:25)

Screen cuts to Bollinger standing at the podium in front of *Alma Mater*.

Onscreen text reads: Lee C. Bollinger, President of Columbia University.

Bollinger speaks: The appropriate academic authorities have determined and have so reported to me those students who have satisfactorily completed the course of study prescribed by the faculty under which they have each been enrolled as a candidate for a university degree. In accordance with the authority vested in me as President of the University, I now admit each of you to the degree for which you have qualified, in token whereof you will subsequently receive your diploma.

Bollinger places a scroll on the table to his left.

Bollinger speaks: Thank you for being part of Columbia University, and congratulations to the Class of 2021.

Bollinger removes his glasses, steps away from the podium, and ascends the steps of Low Library.

Oh, Columbia (52:09)

Screen cuts to pale blue background with onscreen text that reads *Oh, Columbia*, Performed by Notes and Keys, Composed by Tom Kitt (Columbia College, 1996)

Screen cuts to a woman playing an electric keyboard, then alternating closeups of the members.

Notes and Keys sings:

I'd Do Anything To Be By Your Side

I'd Travel The World Both Far And Wide

Through Gathering Storms And The Rising Tide

Columbia, Oh Columbia

But Now The Skies Are The Brightest Blue

And Voices Echo Down The Avenue

It Seems That Everything Reminds Me Of You

Columbia, Oh Columbia

Stand Up, Stand Tall

Don't Let Yourself Give Way

Tomorrow's Still The Future

Today Is Still Today

From Low Steps To The Campus Store

We Feel Your Spirit In Our Very Core

So, Roar You Lion, Roar You Lion, Roar...

Columbia, Oh Columbia

Stand Up, Stand Proud

The Day Has Just Begun

Though We Can't Always Sing Together

We Can Still Sing As One

So, Raise A Glass To Our Old Broadway

Where We Shall Raise One Together Some Day

And Toast Our Alma Mater, Now And For Aye...

Columbia, Oh Columbia, Oh Columbia

Now And For Aye.

Screen cuts to pale blue background with text that reads Columbia University commencement above the University seal.

Empire State of Mind (55:12)

Screen cuts to images of the George Washington Bridge, the Empire State Building, and other iconic New York City landmarks, before cutting to images of students on the Morningside campus.

Music plays: *Empire State of Mind*, by Jay-Z feat. Alicia Keys

Jay-Z sings:

Yeah

Yeah I'm out that Brooklyn, now I'm down in Tribeca

Right next to DeNiro, but I'll be hood forever

I'm the new Sinatra, and, since I made it here

I can make it anywhere, yeah, they love me everywhere

I used to cop in Harlem, all of my Dominicanos

Right there up on Broadway, pull me back to that McDonald's

Took it to my stashbox, 560 State St

Catch me in the kitchen like a Simmons wippin' pastry's

Cruisin' down 8th St, off white Lexus

Drivin' so slow, but BK is from Texas

Me, I'm out that Bed-Stuy, home of that boy Biggie

Now I live on Billboard and I brought my boys with me

Say what up to Ty-Ty, still sippin' Mai Tais

Sittin' courtside, Knicks and Nets give me high five

Nigga I be Spike'd out, I could trip a referee (come on, come on, come on)

Tell by my attitude that I'm most definitely from

Alicia Keys sings:

In New York (ayy, ah-ha) (uh, yeah)

Concrete jungle (yeah) where dreams are made of

There's nothin' you can't do (yeah) (okay)

Now you're in New York (ah-ha, ah-ha, ah-ha) (uh, yeah)

These streets will make you feel brand new (new)

Big lights will inspire you (come on) (okay)

Let's hear it for New York (you're welcome, OG) (come on)

New York (yeah), New York (uh) (I made you hot)

Jay-Z sings:

Catch me at the X with OG at a Yankee game

Shit, I made the Yankee hat more famous than a Yankee can

You should know I bleed blue, but I ain't a Crip though

But I got a gang of niggas walkin' with my clique though

Welcome to the melting pot, corners where we sellin' rock

Afrika Bambataa shit, home of the hip-hop

Yellow cab, gypsy cab, dollar cab, holla back

For foreigners it ain't fair, they act like they forgot how to act
Eight million stories, out there in the naked
City is a pity, half of y'all won't make it
Me, I got a plug, Special Ed "I Got It Made"
If Jesus payin' Lebron, I'm payin' Dwyane Wade
Three dice cee-lo, three card Monte
Labor Day Parade, rest in peace Bob Marley
Statue of Liberty, long live the World Trade (come on, come on, come on)
Long live the King yo, I'm from the Empire State that's
Alicia Keys sings:
In New York (ayy, ah-ha) (uh, yeah)
Concrete jungle (yeah) where dreams are made of
There's nothin' you can't do (that boy good) (okay)
Now you're in New York (uh, yeah)
(Welcome to the bright lights, baby)
These streets will make you feel brand new
Big lights will inspire you (okay)
Let's hear it for New York (come on)
New York (yeah), New York (uh)
Jay-Z sings:
Lights is blinding, girls need blinders
So they can step out of bounds quick, the sidelines is
Lined with casualties, who sip the life casually
Then gradually become worse, don't bite the apple, Eve

Caught up in the in-crowd, now you're in style
End of the winter gets cold, en vogue, with your skin out
City of sin, it's a pity on the whim
Good girls gone bad, the city's filled with them
Mommy took a bus trip, now she got her bust out
Everybody ride her, just like a bus route
"Hail Mary" to the city, you're a virgin
And Jesus can't save you, life starts when the church end
Came here for school, graduated to the high life
Ball players, rap stars, addicted to the limelight
MDMA got you feelin' like a champion (come on, come on, come on)
The city never sleeps, better slip you an Ambien
Alicia Keys sings:
In New York (ayy, ah-ha) (uh, yeah)
Concrete jungle where dreams are made of
There's nothin' you can't do (okay)
Now you're in New York (uh, yeah)
These streets will make you feel brand new
Big lights will inspire you (okay)
Let's hear it for New York (come on)
New York (yeah), New York (uh)
Jay-Z sings:
One hand in the air for the big city
Street lights, big dreams, all lookin' pretty

No place in the world that could compare
Put your lighters in the air everybody say
"Yeah, yeah" (come on, come on, come on)
"Yeah, yeah"

Alicia Keys sings:

In New York (uh, yeah)
Concrete jungle where dreams are made of
There's nothin' you can't do (okay)
Now you're in New York (uh, yeah)
These streets will make you feel brand new
Big lights will inspire you
Let's hear it for New York (come on)
New York (yeah), New York (uh)