

Colorado College Commencement Address 2014
By President Jill Tiefenthaler

Good morning! I am Jill Tiefenthaler and I have the great honor of serving as Colorado College's 13th President. Welcome proud parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, cousins, and friends of our graduates. Thank you for being here. Welcome dedicated faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, our speaker and honorary degree recipients. And welcome and congratulations to the Colorado College Class of 2014!

Are you ready? Yes, I know that you are ready to take on the world. And you should be. Who you are and what you have learned at Colorado College make you well equipped for your next steps. At CC, we are fortunate to attract amazing young people from across the globe. Young people who are creative, independent, thoughtful and passionate. Then, over your four years here, we do all we can, inside and outside the classroom, to help you develop the knowledge, skills and character to help you become lifelong learners, imaginative individuals and inspired leaders.

The liberal arts education that you received at CC has never been more relevant as preparation for work and life. The notion that we are becoming a more diverse society, that the world is continuing to flatten

out, points to the importance of a learning experience that promotes understanding and respect for difference cultures and the value of seeing things from different perspectives. The notion that the future is so uncertain brings home the importance of a nimble mind, comfort with ambiguity and being an accomplished communicator—all liberal arts skills that you have developed at Colorado College.

Your CC education has also helped you to develop important qualities that will benefit you throughout your lives – resilience, focus, humility, grit and creativity. Through the block plan, you have learned to focus, to devote yourselves to a single subject at a time, instilling the importance of being present as a means of solving complicated problems. Our faculty have pushed you and challenged you. You have had to find the tenacity to write and then rewrite, read and then reread. You were encouraged to try new things, to experiment. Sometimes you were wildly successful and sometimes you failed. Your faculty and staff mentors stood by your side and encouraged you to recognize and take responsibility for your mistakes and pick yourself up and try again.

Yes, you are ready for your next adventure! But I also know that it isn't easy for you to leave CC. I have talked with many of you over the last few weeks. While it is clear that you are bubbling with excitement and

anticipation for your future, it is still hard to go. You are sad to leave your mentors. They pushed and challenged you in the classroom; on the playing field; and in your campus leadership roles and they also guided you and cared for you. I expect that you also sad to leave your friends. College friendships are unique. It isn't likely that you will ever again form such strong bonds because only in college do you live, learn, work and socialize with the same group of people. I expect that it is hard to leave this special place - of course the beauty and opportunity of Colorado and our inspiring Peak but also this special place of learning, where you were immersed in the life of the mind, with limited distraction. It's OK that it will difficult to pack the car and drive away, because that means that good things happened for you at Colorado College.

And we will miss you, Class of 2014! You have had an enormous impact on our community. Understanding the importance of academic integrity, members of this class led a multi-year project to rewrite the college's Honor Code, which the student body passed last week. Wanting to be better citizens of the world, you were integral in establishing a minor in global health and a chapter of GlobeMed. You have helped CC become more sustainable by not only leading efforts to meet our water and electricity conservation targets in our sustainability plan, but you also helped to create a

new campus greenhouse, which features an aquaponic tank and space to grow food used by members of our campus. You also collaborated with the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance to provide environmental restoration in several locations around the greater Canyon Lands area. And you have strengthened relationships between the college and the Springs community in numerous ways including - enhancing the Community Engaged Leadership Certificate program, engaging the Colorado Springs City Council and other local leaders on critical issues, and working with many local nonprofits, schools and businesses.

Your class shares many wonderful values – a dedication to making a difference; a genuine concern for the environment and for sustainable living; tolerance of different views and lifestyles; and an understanding of the importance of collaboration - but I have been most impressed with how members of the Class of 2014 support each other.

You showed up to cheer for your classmates who competed in The Big Idea, the NCAA women's soccer tournament game against Duke, and the lacrosse team's thrilling overtime victory against Whittier to take the Locker-Stabler Cup. You applauded your friends who performed in Macbeth, the Bowed Piano Ensemble, Relations, Room 46, Elements, Galapago, Angels in America, Back Row, and Dance Workshop. You rooted

for the women's volleyball team as they won the SCAC championship, the ultimate Frisbee teams as they competed for national recognition and the hockey team as they reclaimed the Gold Pan. You were proud of your classmates who won Carnegie, Watson, Goldwater and Fulbright awards. And you were impressed by each other's senior art shows, thesis presentations, recitals and film screenings.

Nowhere was your commitment and fierce loyalty to your classmates - your friends - more evident than in the fundraising for your class gift. In the fall of your junior year, you lost one of your own. Reuben Mitrani passed away while studying abroad in Switzerland. Over the past two years, you have found ways to include Reuben and his family in your lives and successes. This year you designated the Reuben Eli Mitrani Memorial Scholarship for your class gift. And, of course, for Reuben, the Class of 2014 did it right. You raised more for your class gift than any class in the recent history of Colorado College. Reuben's parents, Donna and Albert, and Reuben's brother, Adam, are here with us today to celebrate your graduation. They have asked me to share their appreciation and love for the Class of 2014.

When I reflect on the enormous contributions the Class of 2014 has made to our community, I am optimistic about the future of our college, country, and global community.

I look forward to seeing how each of you puts your CC education to work in different fields, professions, and graduate programs. You are a talented and passionate bunch, and I am confident that you will make us proud.

You will treasure this day, and the memories of your time here for the rest of your life. As CC's president, I hope that the pride you feel as you walk across the stage today is rivaled only by the fondness with which you remember this place and the relationships you forged. As you continue to learn and to change, reflect on the times when you stumbled and even failed. Recall how your caring mentors and friends pushed you in the right direction, and stretched your imagination and spirit. Keep in touch with each other and your mentors, and always remember that this community and this campus is a place that you can call home.

Congratulations, and I look forward to celebrating with you and your families on Cutler Quad following this ceremony!

Now it is my pleasure to invite Eben Moulton, Chair of the Colorado College Board of Trustees and alumnus from the Class of 1968, to extend greetings and congratulations on behalf of the Board.