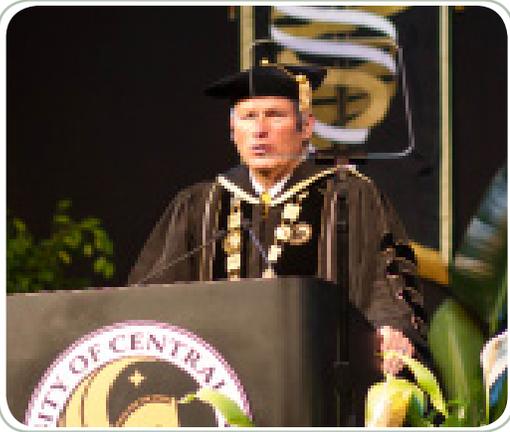


The Medical Commencement Archive

Volume 1, 2014



Dr. John C. Hitt

University of Central Florida College of Medicine

Your Leap Of Faith Has Paid Off

Dr. John C. Hitt is an accomplished educator and leader in higher education. Dr. Hitt graduated cum laude from Austin College where he received his Bachelor's in Psychology. He earned both his Master's degree and Doctoral degree in Physiological Psychology from Tulane University. Dr. Hitt has served as the president of University of Central Florida for over 18 years, during which he has achieved such remarkable accomplishments as planning and winning approval for a new college of medicine, and expanding research funding by over \$114 million a year.

Among his many notable positions of service, he has served as Chair of the State University Presidents Association and a member of the Florida Council of 100, and is the founder of the Florida High Tech Corridor Council.

Thank you, Dean German. And welcome to this very special occasion for our graduates and their families, for the College of Medicine and UCF, and for Central Florida.

Today, as we celebrate our second graduating class of outstanding young doctors, let us briefly consider our remarkable journey. Just over six short years ago, our College of Medicine existed in name only. We had no buildings, no students, no faculty – and no followers on Twitter. But we had no shortage of determination to succeed, or supporters to help us confront the challenges before us.

Today, our young medical school, pioneered by founding Dean German and many enthusiastic advocates, hosts a gorgeous campus and 147 faculty members, 436 staff members, and more than 2,000 volunteer faculty members. And the College of Medicine anchors a thriving Medical City at Lake Nona that is a rising star on the horizon.



of the nation's medical landscape.

Thank you, Deb, and thanks to the outstanding faculty and staff you have attracted and have nurtured so well, and to the many talented volunteers who make such a difference. Like proud parents, you and your colleagues have delivered a class of caring physicians. They are ready to serve, to heal, and to advance the practice of medicine for us all. To all members of Team Deb, congratulations on a job well done!

Graduates, it is my great pleasure to applaud your success, and to praise your distinctive pioneering role in helping to establish America's next great college of medicine.

The dean and the faculty have set the bar very high for the UCF College of Medicine, and you have met the challenge. Your outstanding scholarship and service are models for succeeding classes to emulate.

You embraced and, in many cases, surpassed the high academic standards established by our stellar charter class. You expanded our student engagement in prominent national organizations and enhanced our medical school's reputation through prestigious honors and recognitions. And you pursued exemplary new avenues for community service and outreach. I know that I speak for our entire Knights family – and our entire community – when I say that I am proud of your accomplishments.

As I survey the trail you blazed at UCF, I am reminded of the perspective of Steve Jobs, the co-founder and CEO of Apple. He said, “your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.”

In choosing a medical school, you knew you faced a defining moment for your future. And you could have selected any number of traditional medical schools to help you pursue your dreams.

I suspect that many of your family and friends had strong opinions about which of those you should attend. I further suspect that you remember vividly some of those

lively conversations! And you followed your heart to UCF. You chose this medical school before its campus was finished. You came to this medical school when it was not accredited. And you arrived at this medical school without full scholarships.

You took a big chance on UCF – and your leap of faith has paid off. Because you chose the path less traveled, you enter the next phase of your professional life with some considerable advantages.

You earned an exceptional education from a leading-edge medical school that is rapidly gaining national recognition.

You begin your careers at top hospitals in Orlando, in Florida, and in the nation, in specialties ranging from primary care to anesthesiology and vascular surgery.

And you are forever linked to an innovative Medical City that inspires hope and optimism for new medical solutions throughout America.

Graduates, your instincts served you well in choosing this medical school!

As these graduates launch their careers, they do so at a pivotal time of transition for health care in this country. We are evolving from a model of treating disease to one of promoting wellness and preventing disease. Meanwhile, through the In-

ternet, patients have access to medical information that is unprecedented. And more patients are being covered by insurance. At every turn, technology factors into these significant developments.

Graduates, you are part of an iPad generation with seemingly unlimited applications and possibilities. And we live in a wondrous age of medical advancements made possible, in large part, by breakthroughs in technology.

For instance, bionic eyes are helping the blind to see. Arm transplants are enabling others to hold a glass or to use a steering wheel. Precision-guided cancer treatments are killing tumors while leaving healthy cells to thrive. Who isn't eager to discover what technology will do next for us?

Yes, technology offers tremendous prospects for bettering lives in ways that previous generations could only imagine. And I hope that all of you who are graduating today help us to expand the boundaries of what

“We are evolving from a model of treating disease to one of promoting wellness and preventing disease.”

technology can do.

But, graduates, please remember that the ultimate catalyst for improving the world is you. The biggest game changers in life dare to envision a better society, and then go about creating it.

As computer scientist and futurist Alan Kay said, the best way to predict the future is to invent it. Within each of you – and all of us – is the power to invent a better today and tomorrow. As you invent your tomorrow, I hope you reap the full benefits of the education you have earned. But I also urge you to reach beyond those attainments. Use your precious gift to improve the human condition in every way that you can, to invest in wellness initiatives and healthy living goals wherever your career takes you, and to be The Good Doctor you vowed to become during your White Coat Ceremony.

My respect for the profession you have chosen was always deep. But, in 2006, the qualities of The Good Doctor became more personally significant to me. In June of that year, I was on a strenuous bike ride in the Central Florida Research Park adjacent to our campus. During that ride, I had a serious heart attack. Fortunately, I had a cell phone and could call for help. Later, I made a full recovery. But a key to getting through that difficult time was the encouragement, caring, and patience from some excellent doctors.

As you aspire to excellence, I urge you to enlist the bold pioneer spirit and the instincts that have served you so well at UCF. In her song, *The Whisper of Your Heart*, Trisha Yearwood put it this way:

You've gotta roll with the punches
 You've gotta aim to hit the mar
 You've gotta follow your hunches
 And try to finish what you start
 And when you come to the crossroads
 And you're deciding in the dark
 You've gotta listen to the whisper of your heart

Graduates, we are glad that you listened to your heart in choosing this noble profession – and in choosing UCF. And we appreciate the legacy of excellence you impart to

the students who follow you.

Remember that with each patient you comfort, with each kindness you show, and with each life you save or improve, you will advance the hopes and dreams for all who believe in you at your alma mater and beyond. We can't wait to see the wonderful things you will do!

In closing, let me share a little story that I think is a fitting end to a graduation address. A prominent person once summed up her success in three simple words — “and then some”. She discovered at an early age, she said, that most of the difference between average people and exceptional people could be explained in these three simple words.

**“The biggest
 game changers in
 life dare to
 envision a better
 society, and then
 go about
 creating it.”**

The exceptional people did what was expected of them — and then some.

They were thoughtful of others; they were considerate and kind — and then some.

They met their obligations and responsibilities fairly and squarely — and then some.

They were good friends to their friends — and then some.

They could be counted on in an emergency — and then some.

Three little words — and then some — can transform our culture in school, at work, and in our personal lives. Graduates, as you move into the next phase of your lives, remember the many opportunities that UCF has given you and the many contributions that your loved ones and this community have made on your behalf. Work hard, form partnerships, have fun, get involved, serve others, do great things — and then some. Congratulations to you all and to your families. GO KNIGHTS, charge on, and always reach for the stars!