

Many congratulations on your achievement! Your graduation today from The University of British Columbia signals an important milestone in your personal lives and the lives of those who have supported you in your educational efforts. In achieving this significant goal, you have demonstrated the commitment, creativity, and talent you will need to succeed in your chosen career. The entire UBC community applauds you on your accomplishments and celebrates with you the importance of this momentous occasion.

You are the leaders of tomorrow — you will chart the course for the next generation of writers, artists, business and health professionals, engineers, lawyers, humanists, scientists and teachers. Wherever you choose to make your contribution, you will shape society's actions and exert a powerful influence on the coming generations. As you prepare to assume these roles, I hope you will remember the critical role that The University of British Columbia has played in your preparation...that you will remember how much you have learned at your alma mater. You will use that knowledge to find solutions to some of our most pressing problems. And by so doing, you will ensure that the values we cherish as Canadians are preserved and advanced.

Higher education today is as much about collaboration as it is about individual learning, and over the course of your studies here you will have discovered the value of working collaboratively, of being part of a "team." Whether in sports or in a profession, teamwork directs individual abilities towards meeting objectives successfully by pooling everyone's knowledge and skills. This principle will be key to your success in your chosen career; as you move from the classroom into the workplace, you will take with you an understanding of the power of teamwork to overcome all obstacles and achieve any goal.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR — STEPHEN J. TOOPE

In the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbour, 22,000 Japanese-Canadians were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and interned in prison camps for the duration of World War II. Seventy-six of them were UBC students. Their studies were cut short and their graduation day taken from them by a University that bowed to racism and fear, and failed to live up to its own vision.

The internment irrevocably altered the course of these students' lives, and because of family or financial circumstances, few of them were able to complete their studies, even after the end of the war. Seventy years later, these students and their family members stand side by side with the Class of 2012. On May 30, they receive their UBC degrees.

I consider it an honour to share the stage with each graduating student. Although I do it thousands of times each year, each time is unique. That moment is my opportunity to acknowledge the critical tools and professional skills the student has acquired at UBC, the ability he or she has developed to communicate ideas and understanding of other communities and cultures, and the capacity he or she has built for leadership, for change, and for seeking solutions to the worst of the world's problems.

This year, I will also be acknowledging 76 students' courage in the face of enormous hardship and loss; their willingness to give of their innate intelligence and wisdom to a community and a country

If this seems an overly optimistic prospect, think about how far you have already come, how much you have grown, and what you are part of. As students, and now as graduates, you are valued members of our vibrant UBC community. I invite you to maintain your relationship with the university to which you have already dedicated so much time, hard work, and energy. With 260,000 graduates spread over 120 countries, the Alumni Association is an invaluable resource for you as you embark on your career. I urge you to take advantage of and contribute to this extraordinary community of alumni who began their professional lives at UBC, and who form a network that stretches around the world and crosses all disciplines.

Graduation day is an opportunity for you to reflect on the past and look ahead to the future. This event may well signal a significant change of direction in your life. Whatever direction you choose to take, the knowledge and skills that you have developed here will stand you in good stead, not only in your professional life but also as a contributing member of society. Wherever you may find yourself in the years to come, I hope you will remember your time at UBC with pleasure, and that you will be proud of your association with one of the world's great universities.

Finally, I wish to extend warmest congratulations to the 76 Japanese Canadian students who suffered through blind injustice in the dark days of World War Two. We take inordinate pleasure and pride in celebrating your contributions as citizens of Canada and in officially welcoming you as alumni. It is my sincere hope that your long overdue graduation day is a particularly joyous occasion for you and your families and that, like all alumni, you will cherish the knowledge that UBC is, and will forever be, your university.

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that denied them a formal university education; and the triumph of their essential decency over injustice—their leadership, in other words—their capacity to effect change, and their gracious responses to one of the world's worst problems. Those qualities were exemplified in the exhortation of one Japanese-Canadian woman to her children after their UBC education was cut short and their beloved father was taken away: *Shoganai*¹ she said. *Proceed*.

One of Western culture's most cherished ideas is that it's never too late. "It's never too late to be what you might have been," said George Eliot. "It is never too late to give up our prejudices," said Henry David Thoreau. "The time for action is now," said Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: "It's never too late." I hold firm to the hopefulness of this idea, even as I recognize that for some things, the time has passed. UBC's current leadership cannot right all the wrongs committed in the past, but it is not too late to redress them. In addition to the awarding of degrees, UBC's Faculty of Arts will establish an Asian-Canadian Studies Program, and UBC Library will create an archive of materials relating to this period in the University's history.

Stephen Toope

¹ *Shoganai* translates as "it can't be helped." It is a common Japanese phrase used to express the need for acceptance in the face of insurmountable difficulties. This detail is taken from the documentary *A Degree of Justice*.