

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Graduation season: a wonderful time of year

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It's a bustling time of year in academia, when the hard work and dedication of hundreds of thousands of students are acknowledged at commencement exercises across the country.

With the turn of a tassel, a new generation of leaders and changemakers emerges, carrying with them an incomparable sense of pride, accomplishment and hope for what's yet to come.

With a glance of my calendar, I'm quickly reminded why graduation season is the most wonderful time of the year— eight commencement engagements in as many weeks, and countless reminders of human potential, the value of perseverance and the importance of goal setting.

This year, for the first time, I had the honor to preside over five graduation ceremonies as chairman of the Board of Trustees at Miami Dade College, where a record number of graduates — nearly 17,000 — celebrated this amazing accomplishment.

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I also had the opportunity to return to my undergraduate alma mater, the University of Miami, as an Alumni Marshal for the School of Business graduation. What a humbling reminder of my years at “The U,” and working full time at the university while taking advantage of the Tuition Remission program in order to afford my studies.

In the coming weeks, I’ll be welcomed as commencement speaker at St. Brendan High School, where many years ago and thanks to the generosity of financial aid, I started planting the seeds of my academic and moral future. Finally, I’m thrilled to preside over the graduation ceremony as chairman Emeritus of the LBA Construction & Business Management Academy, the first business charter high school started by a business association in the United States.

The Class of 2018, like graduates who came before them, embody the American success story, one where anyone with a dream can achieve it if they find an open door to opportunity.

These students, each with their unique story, walk away from their commencement ceremonies with a new credential, a new ticket to success. Many will transition to undergraduate programs and graduate schools at some of our nation’s most prestigious institutions of higher education, and others will join the professional ranks as competent contributors to the 21st century workforce.

Regardless of their individual journeys, these students personify commitment and excellence, and their success should inspire each of us to fervently champion education at every level. I’m honored to have the opportunity, year after year, to witness the great strides in the lives of these students, and to play a small part in the development of our next generation of leaders. I am so deeply proud of all of them.

Congratulations to the Class of 2018!

***BERNIE NAVARRO,***

***CHAIRMAN OF MIAMI DADE COLLEGE’S BOARD OF TRUSTEES***

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