



# Howard V. Levine, AET '72, AE '74, Commencement Address. May 13, 2006

Thank you President Pantic for your kind introduction. Good morning and congratulations to the Class of 2006! Greetings to your parents, families and friends; President Pantic; members of the Board of Trustees; faculty; students and guests. I am honored to be part of this important day in your lives for I feel a strong connection to you, since I too am a Wentworth graduate. I am also very humbled to have received an honorary degree, as it holds a special meaning for me to be recognized in this way by my alma mater. Graduation day is a glorious time for you. It is a day filled with excitement, and it is a special moment in time for you to be recognized for your dedication to learning, your diligent completion of your coursework, and the sacrifices you and your families have made in order to reach this wonderful day. I want to speak to you today about "Life After Wentworth" via my very own TOP 10 LIST! I chose this format so everyone could keep track of WHEN my speech would end! But unlike comedian David Letterman's Top 10 List, mine have equal value and begin with Number One. So, here goes...

**NUMBER 1: WENTWORTH PEOPLE SEEK OUT WENTWORTH PEOPLE.** It is amazing how many people you will meet along life's path who are Wentworth graduates. In your job search, or just in random circles, inevitably, someone successful will be a Wentworth graduate. Networking with other Wentworth alums will be invaluable to you as many alums work in a variety of fields and industries and seek out Wentworth grads to employ. **WENTWORTH PEOPLE SEEK OUT WENTWORTH PEOPLE.**

**NUMBER 2: ALWAYS STAND PROUD OF YOUR ALMA MATER.** There are many fine universities and educated graduates that you will be competing against in the workforce. But your education here will definitely put you above many, for you have had the opportunity to be part of the cutting edge of technology that has been provided on campus, you have had the opportunity to take part in Wentworth's successful co-op programs, and you were taught by outstanding faculty and nurtured by the caring staff. **ALWAYS STAND PROUD OF YOUR ALMA MATER.**

**NUMBER 3: FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE LASTING IMPRESSIONS.** When you leave here, you will no longer be a student, but part of the workforce. As a student, it was your time to learn about who you were and what courses or activities interested you. You could dress like you wanted to dress, act like you wanted to act. But, when you leave Wentworth and begin your career, you will represent that company and yourself. Always put your best foot forward...in your dress, your manner, your communication skills, your ethical conduct and show the world who you are in a positive way. **FIRST IMPRESSIONS ARE LASTING IMPRESSIONS.**

**NUMBER 4: BE APPRECIATIVE OF ALL OPPORTUNITIES.** We all leave college wanting to start off on top. But it is important to be willing to start from the bottom and work your way up. As an architect, I have learned that building a structure begins with the foundation. What is a foundation? Certainly not the most attractive part of the structure, but the most important. The foundation supports the growth of the project. So build your career from the foundation up and learn all aspects of the task or project willingly. **BE APPRECIATIVE OF ALL OPPORTUNITIES.**

**NUMBER 5: BE A LEADER.** Whether you work for a large company, or a small company, or work for yourself, your goal should be to become a leader. How do you do that? Be willing to take on a variety of tasks and learn each one well to gain experience. Some tasks may be mundane and even boring, but complete them successfully. In addition, be a good communicator, as it is important to be able to speak and write clearly with your co-workers, clients, and customers. **BE A LEADER.**

**NUMBER 6: BE A MENTOR.** As you continue to grow and become more experienced in your job, be willing to take a newcomer under your wing. There is no greater feeling than having someone look to you for your knowledge, and experience, and know you can

provide the solution. This is not just in the work environment, but in your personal life as well. **BE A MENTOR.**

**NUMBER 7: SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE.** Your generation is computer savvy, and all of you are knowledgeable in the latest computer technology. If you know of a better solution to a problem or a clearer method of getting from point A to point B, share your knowledge with your team and use that knowledge to empower others as well as yourself. Brainstorming together is teamwork and teamwork is key to a successful project. **SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE.**

**NUMBER 8: GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.** You have been given the opportunity to participate in community projects through Wentworth's Center for Community & Learning Partnerships, the hub for community service and outreach initiatives. View Wentworth's program as a model and take time out of your busy schedule to help others by volunteering your time to worthwhile and meaningful organizations. You will meet the most extraordinary people along that journey. **GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.**

**NUMBER 9: GIVE BACK TO WENTWORTH.** A number of years after I graduated from Wentworth, I received an invitation to attend an alumni reception. At the reception, I met a former classmate and one of my teachers. They invited me to come to their next alumni board meeting and I said yes. From then on I was hooked, and have been actively involved ever since. Being involved has been one of the most rewarding and satisfying experiences in my life. I have made life-long friends and have met so many wonderful people. I am forever grateful to be able to give back my time as a thank you to Wentworth for providing me with an excellent education and the foundation for my career as a registered architect. When you are ready, I hope each of you will look into the numerous programs and activities that are offered to alums and come back and be part of the Wentworth Family. **GIVE BACK TO WENTWORTH.**

**AND NUMBER 10: REMEMBER YOUR TIME AT WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.** I hope your college experience will forever be a strong foundation in your career path and will have played a role in who you are as a person today. The excellent work ethics you have learned, the quality education that you have received and the friendships you have made will follow you throughout your life. Always remember your past. Pull from it all of the positive experiences you have had and learn from the ones that were difficult. Use all your life skills to help shape your future goals and dreams. **REMEMBER YOUR TIME AT WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.**

So, I have had two themes today. The first is the power of your Wentworth education and your continuing connection to this institution. The second is the need to transition to a serious adult life. This idea is summarized best by the famous sex therapist Dr. Ruth (I knew that would get your attention!). She wrote about "risk" in her commencement address to the graduates of Trinity College in 2004. I would like to take this opportunity to read to you a portion of one of her paragraphs that I felt was very insightful and right on the mark: "My favorite animal is the turtle. The reason is, that in order for the turtle to move, it has to stick its neck out. There are going to be times in your life when you're going to have to stick your neck out. There will be challenges...and instead of hiding in a shell, you have to go out and meet them. To live life at its fullest, you have to accept challenges. Sometimes you will be shaking in your boots after accepting some major challenge. But you can't let that stop you. It really is better to fail, than not to try, because if you never try, you'll never succeed, and as bad as FAILURE feels, SUCCESS feels so much better."

Thank you for giving me this incredible opportunity to be your commencement speaker. I wish you all success in your chosen careers, and congratulations, once again, to you, the Class of 2006!