

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **GOVERNOR ADDRESSES COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY OF UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY**

Gov. Christie Whitman told graduates of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) today that medicine is an art and that doctors, like any truly great artists, must constantly study and hone their craft.

"Part of your art will be understanding human nature and the world around you," the Governor told graduates at the UMDNJ commencement ceremony in Camden. "Patients and their families will expect easy, instant cures. Whether you're on the front line of patient care or on the cutting edge of medical research, you will have to remind them that it doesn't work that way -- and do so in a sensitive caring way."

"As if that isn't enough of a challenge, you will have to learn to balance your professional life with your personal life," the Governor said. "At the end of life, no one ever regrets not going to enough meetings or staying late enough in the office. As medical professionals, your choices will be even more difficult or even out of your hands -- the Little League game or the emergency appendectomy, the piano recital or evening rounds. That's why you'll have to work overtime at being good husbands, wives, and parents."

Attached is a copy of the Governor's remarks.

#### **GOVERNOR WHITMAN'S SPEECH UMDNJ COMMENCEMENT CAMDEN WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1998**

Dr. Bergen, Ms. Miranda, Trustees, members of the faculty and staff, friends, families, and especially today's graduates: Thank you for this honor and for inviting me today.

I know you're all anxious to get your hands on those hard-won diplomas and get on with some well-deserved celebrating. So, if I may, I'd like to reassure you about the length of my speech by borrowing a phrase from your new profession: relax -- this won't hurt a bit.

First, let me congratulate you and your families and loved ones. Getting through school is tough at any level, and helping someone get through school -- whether financially or emotionally -- can be even tougher.

You are an inspiring class. Look around at your fellow graduates: the new doctor who is also a new mother of early-arriving triplets; the single father who was a police officer before returning to school; the mother who worked full-time, founded a spinal cord injury support group, and is getting her masters degree.

What remarkable stories. Each and every one of you can be proud to be members of the great Class of '98.

As you all know, you are not the only ones graduating today. It took him 27 years, but Dr. Stanley Bergen has finally finished up his assignments at UMDNJ.

Since 1971, Stan has been the guiding force behind this great institution -- creating a multi-campus health sciences university for New Jersey. After all his hard work, Stan has earned his final grade: "E." Not "E" for effort, although that would certainly be fitting, but "E" for emeritus -- as in Founding President Emeritus.

From the Violence Institute to the Camden Medical Arts High School to the Cancer Institute of New Jersey, he has helped UMDNJ look beyond its own four walls to our community and our state. I know you all join with me in congratulating Dr. Bergen and wishing him the best in his many future endeavors.

Now I'm sure those of you graduating today are both excited and a bit overwhelmed. Graduation is always a time of mixed emotions. It's probably difficult to see past the challenges that await you in the years ahead.

But when you envision your future, don't lose sight of the example set by so many of the faculty and staff here at UMDNJ. Determination. Concern for people. Commitment to quality.

Coming from an institution with seven schools on five campuses, you have had different classes, different teachers, and a wide variety of experiences. But you all have one thing in common -- you are now graduates of the largest free-standing publicly supported health sciences university in the country. I'm pleased to learn that your Board of Trustees has just approved formation of an eighth school -- a School of Public Health to train tomorrow's decision makers in the health issues that

affect our communities, our state, and our country as we enter the next millennium.

There's something else all you graduates have in common – you've spent a lot of time in laboratories. And I know you've learned a lot of important lessons in the lab:

All unmarked beakers contain fast-acting, extremely toxic poisons.

Any delicate and expensive piece of glassware will break before you can use it.

And if you're hoping for a good result, don't believe in miracles – rely on them.

That last one is particularly good advice. Remember that miracles happen every day. Who would have thought when UMDNJ was founded that heart surgery would be practically routine today? That women in their sixties could give birth? That the cure for cancer may be right around the corner – or at least down the block right here in New Jersey?

When blinded by all that science, though, don't forget what that great "oath-writer" Hippocrates said – medicine is an art. And like the truly great artists, you will need to constantly study and hone your craft.

Part of your art will be understanding human nature and the world around you. Patients and their families will expect easy, instant cures. Whether you're on the front lines of patient care or on the cutting edge of medical research, you will have to remind them that it doesn't work that way – and do so in a sensitive and caring way.

As if all that isn't enough of a challenge, you will have to learn to balance your professional life with your personal life. At the end of life, no one ever regrets not going to enough meetings or staying late enough in the office. As medical professionals, your choices will be even more difficult or even out of your hands – the Little League game or the emergency appendectomy, the piano recital or evening rounds.

That's why you'll have to work overtime at being good husbands, wives, and parents. You'll be pulled between your patients and your family. Some of you will be tempted to hide from your life in your work. Don't let that happen. Your family should always occupy a central place in your life – whether you're a doctor, dentist, nurse, researcher, teacher -- or governor.

Finally, as you make your way in the world, remember what you've learned – and where you learned it. New Jersey needs the talent, energy, and dedication of people like you for a bright future. I hope that you'll consider making your careers and your homes here in the Garden State. As Dr. Bergen found out, New Jersey and you can be perfect together.

Thank you, and congratulations.