

**Valedictorian's Address NSU Commencement Ceremony,  
May 2004, Hilton Hotel, Kingston Jamaica.**

Specially invited guests, parents, spouses, other family members, friends and fellow graduates, a pleasant afternoon to you. It is indeed an honour to speak on behalf of my fellow graduates, and I do so with a sense of pride and deep humility.

Today's graduates comprise a group of unique individuals who have completed courses of studies in Professional Management and Applied Professional Studies at the Bachelors level; Business Administration , Human Resource Management, the Graduate Teacher Education Programme and Instructional Technology & Distance Education at the Masters level; Business Administration and Instructional Technology & Distance Education at the Doctoral level.

We wish to express deepest gratitude to our families, especially our parents, spouses, and children; to our friends, well wishers, professors and school administrators. Without you today would be simply impossible. Many have traveled great distances to celebrate with us today and we are honoured by your presence. Without you, our dreams would still be in the sunshine amidst the clouds, allowing us to enjoy there beauty only from afar. Thankfully today we can see our dreams transformed into reality and we can embrace them and bask in the warmth of fulfillment.

We embarked on this journey because we believe in the power of education to change lives, improve social conditions and make the world a better place to live in. According to Paul Hanus (1920) 'Education is a great social force'. When people decide that their future is not worth the investment of their time and effort through education, then something important in them has been destroyed. When the country you live in or the company you work for decides that educating people is not important, futures are replaced by despair. It's interesting to note that wherever invaders have trod, history is replete with examples that show that their first order of business was to destroy major universities and other places of higher learning. The fact is, civilization thrives and fortune favours education and knowledge. Destroy the seat of education and knowledge and people are left with little hope and a dismal future. I strongly believe that education provides a people with hope, and thus should be kept relevant to current realities.

As we look ahead, so many different paths lie before us, but let us not become too individualistic and selfish that we will step on anyone or do anything to get ahead. Neither let us become numb to the plight of those who suffer and need our kindness.

Collectively, we need to re-think what we stand for in today's world. What kind of society do we want for ourselves and our children? It has been said that all it takes for evil to triumph is for a few good men and women to standby and do nothing. The fact that we are here today, means that we have answered the call, but we need to rise to the

occasion. We must use the privilege of our NSU education to work towards more effectively addressing the problems in our society. The problems that we sometimes feel are not our responsibility. But whose responsibility are they? We owe it not only to ourselves but to others who will depend on us and look to us for leadership. Most importantly, we have to look deep within and think hard and often, about what we believe and what we in our unique way can do to advance those positive beliefs and values. The change has to start somewhere and my colleagues, it should begin with each of us.

Today let us commit to start anew and take the knowledge that we have gleaned at NSU and use it to inform our work, light our paths and inspire our thoughts.

As we march forward, proudly flying the NSU flag high, I wish you, much happiness, and much success as we take the next turn on this our journey of life.

Ladies and Gentlemen, do enjoy the afternoon.