MR. A. NORMAN SABGA
HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS (LLD)
UWI, St Augustine | SOCIAL SCIENCES GRADUATION CEREMONY
FRIDAY 23RD OCTOBER 2015

Professor Sir George Alleyne – Chancellor of the University of the West Indies
Professor Sir Hilary Beckles – Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies
Professor Clement Sankat – Pro Vice Chancellor and Campus Principal, St Augustine
Graduands
Honorary Graduates
Distinguished Guests
Family and Friends

Good Morning.

I am honored to join you today in your Graduation ceremony from the University of the West Indies. I am grateful to stand before you, not only because of the great honour that the university has bestowed on me and the other graduands, but more so, to be part of the conclusion of this chapter of your lives, and the commencement of what is to follow.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the St Augustine Campus of the University, as it commemorates the 55th anniversary of its inception this year.

This is an extremely significant milestone in the history of the campus, which over the half-century, has become the region’s leading institution of higher education, and an important part of the Caribbean’s post-independence legacy.

Truth be told, I never graduated from University. The demands of life required me to leave Fordham University in New York and return home to join the family business. Therefore my words to you today, are ones not covered in your standard syllabus.

Robin Sharma said, “TO BE A LEADER IS NOT TO HAVE A HUGE POSITION. TO BE A LEADER IS TO SEE YOUR JOB AS A CHANCE TO INSPIRE THE WORLD, NO MATTER WHAT THAT JOB MAY BE.”

I chose that quote as I am hopeful that my words act as a source of inspiration.

I acknowledge that I am offering words of advice in front of a faculty, whose ideas and research positively impact our lives. And I do so, in a gathering complemented by the wisdom of so many parents, grandparents and great grandparents, who have been a source of incredible inspiration for our graduates.

So bearing all this in mind, I will share some personal discoveries with you, that have served me well thus far.
LIFE IS A JOURNEY.
I have always told my children that life is about the choices that you make. At each junction, you are posed with a question, left or right, up or down, A or B. There is always a choice to be made and this leads me to my first point.

BE HUMBLE AND LET YOUR MORALS, VALUES AND INTEGRITY GUIDE YOU.
The decisions that you make at every turn, will not only define WHERE you will be tomorrow, but more significantly, WHO you will be.

The only true thing that is yours in this lifetime, is your name. Use it wisely. Defend it passionately. Do not attach it to anything that would compromise your values. Make your word count. Set the highest standards for yourself and take pride in all that you do.

NOTHING IS ACHIEVED WITHOUT HARD WORK.
This single statement resonates with me and continues to be one of my core beliefs.

You see, there is tremendous dignity and wisdom in these words. As current trends and history have taught us, those who try to achieve success without sacrifice, ultimately deceive themselves and others. Nothing worth having comes easy, and if it is easy to get, then nobody wants it.

BE DISCIPLINED. DO NOT TAKE SHORTCUTS.
Doors will not instantly open to the highest position in any institution just because you have earned a degree. My point is that natural ability alone will only get you so far. You have to invest the time and effort for your gifts to unfold and your skills to get sharper.

There are no shortcuts to success.

The journey would naturally be longer but more worthwhile. How you navigate through it, will provide you with the knowledge and skills to oversee future tasks.

PREPARE FOR UNCERTAINTY.
Life has a habit of throwing us curve balls. So even if you can’t plan for those exact moments, you can certainly prepare.

A great batsman doesn’t know when a bouncer is going to be bowled at him, but knows it will at some point, and he can prepare for what he will do when that time comes.

We rarely control the timing of opportunities, but we can control our preparations.
YOU CAN NOT DO IT ALONE.
I have had the good fortune to be surrounded by some brilliant, intuitive thinkers and doers, and together as a team, we have made the ANSA McAL Group the most successful conglomerate in the region.

Allow those around you to flourish and share in the success. As a leader your main role is to act at their North Star.

COMMIT TO EXCELLENCE.
There is always room to improve and as such, I have always challenged myself to do better. What needed to be done today, was never left for tomorrow. Through committal, those around you will feed off that passion, thereby ensuring that Excellence becomes a habit.

BE BRAND AMBASSADORS.
Represent yourself in a meaningful way, not only in your workplace but in your communities and homes. Be brand ambassadors of the University of the West Indies and of your respective countries.

Remember the people you have met along the way who have helped shaped you.

We live in a country that provides us with opportunities which we must not take for granted. Therefore we must strive to make it better for future generations and give back to society.

STAY CONNECTED.
We live in a world of Globalization with changing attitudes, new trends and a rapid pace of new technologies.

Education does not stop after you graduate. It doesn’t stop after you finish your degree.

In fact, you are going to advance in life by what you are going to learn AFTER you leave here today.

WORK HARD AND PLAY HARD.
Life is for the living and balance is critical in life.

What is the point of being successful, if you do not take the time to enjoy it?

Time is a precious commodity so use it wisely and participate meaningfully.
THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS FAILURE – FAIL BIG AND DREAM BIGGER.

Walt Disney said “ALL OUR DREAMS COME TRUE, IF WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO PURSUE THEM”.

Everything starts with a dream and like all dreams they are littered with challenges and tastes of failure.

I don’t know of anyone who has achieved something significant without also experiencing their share of hardship. I too, have walked down that road.

So, do not let obstacles stop you from dreaming or hamper your journey to success.

Don’t believe that something in your past prevents you from doing great work in the future. Dream big, and use these dreams to fuel and motivate you in your quest for success.

FAITH, FAMILY AND LOVE.
Ensure that these words are kept alive, as they will keep you grounded and focused in your life at all times.

One of the most important decisions you will make in your lifetime, is whom you chose to spend the rest of your life with.

I am where I am today because of the love and support that I have received from my wife Alma. Finally, Life is short. Don’t waste it on doing something that brings you unhappiness.

I have always been guided by the words of my Father, Dr. Anthony N. Sabga.

“Find a job that you love and you will never have to work a day in your life”

I did !!

Thank you graduating class of 2015 and God bless you on your future journey.