

*“E holomua kākou i ka lei lanakila!” Let us all press onward together!*

Aloha everyone my name is Chazlyn Harada, and I wanted to first give appreciation to all of our graduates and their families. I am a recent graduate from the University of Hawai‘i Distance Learning Bachelor’s Program from the UH West O‘ahu Bachelors of Social Science with an Emphasis in Political Science. I am honored and privileged to have been given this opportunity to speak to all of you: dignitaries, honorees, community, staff, teachers, families, and fellow graduates. I wanted to acknowledge as well, how important it is for us at this time to exemplify positivity especially in this time where there are wars, contentions of every kind, and global climate crisis that are affecting our brothers and sisters across the Pacific and around the world. Amongst all of these adversities that we all face, we are here making a change for the better. This is our time! We are here making a choice to impact the future, and creating possibilities for those whom we love and care for to have an example to look to and follow. It is going to take all of us to make the difference of what will be the future for the next generation of Hawaii and its people. We are standing on the summit of our lives, right here at this moment. I want all of us to take this moment to ponder and envision the journey up until this point. All the hard work, the challenges, the academics, the balance and the struggle of home life, every part that has transpired up until right now. This is your moment, you have arrived at this very place at this specific time because you did your part, you made the sacrifice to rise to the occasion and have a seat at the table. For some of you this has been a long time coming to get to this spot, for some this is just the beginning of an educational career to Master’s, a Doctorate or even bigger dreams of something more.

I want to echo this to all of you the same message that my favorite Kumu Kaleimakamae Ka‘auwai spoke and taught me when I was 9 & 10 years old that I hold dear till this day, “Mai hopohopo, E maika‘i ‘ana!” In essence, “don’t worry everything will work for our good”. No matter how difficult life may be under the most pressures we are still able to come out the other end shining bright like a diamond. My sister and I are here to share and to cheer you on with words of encouragement but most of all of commitment that there is always a way. I will quote some important lines that I have used to help me withstand and hold true at moments of obstacles, impossibilities, and sure luck. “You are one with the

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force, and the force is one with you” As kānaka we believe in the power of manifestation and the ability to call upon our kūpuna to guide us. We are a chosen generation, one that is here to set the mark, to create the new, and to change the constant. Just like one of my favorite poets Dr. Maya Angelou said “We rise, we rise, we rise” this phrase highlights the triumph over the hardships of life. Like Master Shifu, who repeated to himself “inner, inner, inner peace” in Kung Fu Panda. We are all seeking love, kindness, and peace.

We as kānaka come from great stock and with our collective efforts as a lāhui we can start to change our surroundings from our relationships in our homes, our social circles, our schools, and our pae ‘āina Hawai‘i. No matter the obstacle, we can and we will triumph. I speak from the journey of my great-great grandmother, great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, and my elder sister. These strong women in my life have shown me the way and taught me through their own life trials the lessons needed to be learned and practiced. It is up to all of us here to be brave, to take the mantle, and complete the work unfinished. “E holomua kākou i ka lei lanakila” Let us all press onward together!

Me ka leo kāko‘o o kēia,

A hui hou!

- Exit Stage -