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Jo Ann M. Gora

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**Office of the President**AD Building 101
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306 U.S.A.
Phone: (765) 285-5555
Fax: (765) 285-1461
president@bsu.edu[Ball State University](#)2000 W. University Ave.
Muncie, IN 47306
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[Sunny skies and bright
smiles shine on Ball State
University's commencement
day](#)More than 15,000 people,
including 2,500 graduates,
enjoyed a picture-perfect
commencement day on the
Ball State University Old
Quad, as keynote speaker
David Gergen**President Gora's spring 2005 commencement remarks** (5/7/2005)You already have been graced with the words of David Owsley
and David Gergen, and so I promise just a few brief remarks as
we close this ceremony.In his 1972 book "Golf in the Kingdom," author Michael Murphy
weaves a fascinating, fictional tale about his visit to a famous
Scottish golf links. His pilgrimage to the place he dubs
Burningbush, turns into a lesson about golf and mysticism
when he plays the links with a local golf pro named Shivas
Irons. After the round, Irons invites Murphy to dinner with
some of the townsfolk. The group engages in a lively
philosophical discussion about their love, or hate, for golf and
how the game reflects life.One of the guests muses about standing over the ball and
visualizing a perfect shot. "All of our experience is full of
anticipation; we love what we might be." Those words ring true
on an occasion such as today. The years of kindergarten through high school are about
receiving an education, particularly the foundational skills necessary to become a productive
member of society. A college degree, however, is about *achieving* an education, and you have
chosen your academic and co-curricular experiences at Ball State based upon the anticipation of
what you might be after graduation. Those experiences have prepared you well for your next
steps in life. My wish for each one of you is that your experiences beyond Ball State are also
filled with anticipation and that "what you will be," sparks a passion within you that drives you
to live each aspect of your lives to the fullest.Having passion allows you to overcome the inevitable obstacles—some small, some large—that
we all face. American writer, editor, and printer, Elbert Hubbard once said, "The biggest mistake
you can make in life is to be constantly afraid of making one." Life is about risk and reward, and
Hubbard would have found a kindred spirit in Michael Murphy's fictional golf pro. Shivas Irons
insisted his pupils follow the flight of every shot to the very end—no matter how bad the shot.
"We blind ourselves by turning away too soon," he said. By seeing where our errant shots land
or how our mistakes play out, we learn lessons that build the character necessary to take the
next risk in search for a better outcome.Your future successes in this rapidly changing world also depend upon acquiring information and
using it wisely. A degree does not signify the end of your education. In fact, today marks the
end of the beginning of a lifelong educational process. Your degree becomes more valuable as
you show your employers—or perhaps your employees—how well you adapt to change. You will
also find life more enjoyable and rewarding if you challenge yourself, whether out of necessity
or interest, to delve in and seek answers to the questions that arise every day.In doing so, you will experience what that fictional golf guru, Shivas Irons, said about the
odyssey of life. "We should learn to enjoy what *is* while seeking our treasure for tomorrow." He
found golf good for that purpose..."because if it is a journey, it is also a round; it always leads

back to the place you started from."

On behalf of the Ball State University Alumni Association, I welcome each graduate to our alumni ranks. YOU are now one of over 139,000 living Ball State alumni. I encourage you to use the alumni association to keep us informed about the changes and achievements in your lives. We hope the association builds an even stronger bond between you and Ball State than the one that has been established during your time here. And, over time, we hope, like a round of golf, life will lead you back to this place, Ball State—for a visit, To serve on a committee, to fulfill an educational need, or perhaps to start a career. After all, in the anticipation of what you might be in life, this is the place where the experiences, your experiences, started from.

I hope you enjoy the time you will spend today with your friends, fellow graduates, and families. And again, congratulations on reaching this special day in your lives.

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