

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on May 15, 2022

Location: JMA Wireless Dome

Remarks: 2022 Commencement Ceremony

Welcome everyone—graduates, faculty, staff, alumni, family, friends, trustees.

Welcome to the class of 2022 Syracuse University Commencement.

2022 Graduates, I will be brief. In this ceremony, you will hear a lot of speeches, then I will have the honor of conferring 6,493 degrees, then your loved ones will cheer wildly, then we will all sing the alma mater and sway one last time. There will be joy, because this is a happy day. Each of you who are graduating today got here because of your own hard work. Each of you who are graduating today also got here because of so many who have faith in you.

Some of those people who have faith in you—your faculty, and the staff—are sitting in front of you and working all around this Dome and outside it. Some of the people who support you and have faith in you—friends, family, classmates—are right behind you and next to you, where once again, as always, they have your back.

Some of the people who have supported you are watching this ceremony through the webcast from all around the world.

I thank every single person, here in the Dome, or around the world, who helped each of you arrive at this glorious day.

But today I ask that we all thank in particular one subset of our Orange community.

These last two years have been extraordinarily challenging for the world and for every university around the world. In so many college towns in this country, things fell apart. It was not possible to continue in person instruction and activities. But that did not happen at Syracuse.

In this place, our community came together in support of this University, and this University came together in support of our community. Our people, our institutions, our colleges, Upstate Medical University and our hospitals, our county and city governments, our neighbors --- all of us pulled together and helped this University so that you could have a university experience this last two years.

Why did that happen here? I believe it is because this university is more a part of this community, and this community is more a part of this university, than at most places. Our community is on this campus often – at events in this Dome and at performances and competitions. Our campus – you our graduates – have been part of this community too, as engaged citizens, donating hundreds of thousands of hours of service to countless schools, civic organizations, governments, and neighbors. And most importantly of all, unlike at so many top universities, hundreds and hundreds of our students graduating today are from this surrounding community – are from the City of Syracuse, from the Onondaga Nation, and from surrounding communities in Central New York. Just to give you three examples today:

Lia Diaz Marrero graduates today with a degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs with a major in International Relations. She is a graduate of Fowler High School in the City of Syracuse. While at Syracuse University, Lia participated in the Maxwell-in-Washington program and studied at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. She was the director of diversity and inclusion for the Residence Hall Association, a research assistant in the Moynihan Institute and an academic coach in the Center for Learning and Student Success. After graduation, Lia will be pursuing a Master’s in Public Administration at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs with a Forever Orange Scholarship.

Second, Nathan Redmond graduates today with a degree from the Falk College of Sport and Human Dynamics, majoring in Health and Exercise Science and minoring in biology at the College of Arts and Sciences. He attended Baker High School in nearby Baldwinsville. As a student, he served as a resident advisor, a student researcher, and a peer advisor. Nathan has been a member of Syracuse University Ambulance since his freshman year. Currently he's an Emergency Medical Technician and responsible for training new SU Ambulance members. As a participant in the Global Medical Brigade, he traveled to Panama to provide medical care to isolated communities. After graduation, Nathan plans to spend a year working as an EMT at Greater Baldwinsville Ambulance Corp. and a patient care tech at St. Joseph’s Hospital. He is considering attending medical school.

And third, Victoria Baratta graduates today with a degree in Psychology from the College of Arts and Sciences through the College of Professional Studies. She is an Army veteran and life-long resident of Liverpool. Victoria has been working on her Syracuse University bachelor’s degree since 2001. She pursued her studies while working full-time, while also serving in the Army Reserves, and while also raising a spectacular family. She is one of the first Black female police officers in Syracuse and recently retired after a distinguished 28-year career. She also serves as a martial arts instructor and a mentor through the Syracuse City Schools. On campus, Victoria is a member of the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honorary Society and is a 2022 alumni scholar. Today she joins her daughter, a 2020 SU graduate, as a Syracuse University alumna.

Congratulations Lia, Nathan and Victoria.

These are just three examples of our hundreds of graduates from Central New York. There are so many graduates here today who came to this University from the City of Syracuse, from the Onondaga Nation, and from Central New York. Like all of you, wherever in the world you are from, these students were supported by thousands of people in this community over the past two years. All of us at Syracuse University are so grateful to all of you from Central New York for seeing us through these last two years. I ask everyone here today among the graduates and the audience who is from the City of Syracuse, the Onondaga Nation, or the surrounding communities in Central New York, to stand now or to wave. We all thank you.

To everyone in the Class of 2022: on behalf of all of us on the faculty, all the staff, all the alumni, and all in the community: Thank you. You have done wondrous things here in the most challenging times. We all know, we all have faith, that you will do marvelous things in the future.

Please aim high. And always, Go Orange.