

Connected for Good

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Wow! What an impressive and inspiring sight to see all of you graduates gathered here today to celebrate an end and a beginning! You have entered and learned, and now it is time to go forth and serve. What exciting opportunities await you!

I love BYU! BYU exists to provide an outstanding education in an atmosphere of faith. But I believe BYU also exists because of the opportunity it provides to connect us with others.

I speak to you today on behalf of BYU's Alumni Association. Our motto is Connected for Good. I want to share with you what I think that means.

My dad and my mom met at BYU in a class called Your Religious Problems. They were married a short time later, which, I suppose, solved their religious problems.

Four members of my family are out there with you in this sea of blue before me—part of this great BYU class of 2018.

My nephew Michael studied neuroscience and is off to medical school in Arizona. My niece Lauren studied organizational behavior and is off to take a job in the human resources department of a company in Salt Lake City.

My niece Lydia studied elementary education and Spanish and is off to take her dream job teaching first graders in a Spanish immersion program at an elementary school in Saratoga Springs.

My son Spencer is graduating today in finance, and he is staying right here on campus to go to the BYU Law School. Someday he hopes to use his BYU education and his missionary experience in Hong Kong to work in Asia.

In the summer of 1987, I met my wife, Joy, here on what was supposed to be a group night hike to the Y that ended up being just the two of us. Well, that solved one of my most pressing religious problems too, and without a doubt, she is my very best BYU connection.

But when we talk about our BYU connections, we aren't only talking about our relatives. I first connected with President Kevin J. Worthen when he was my state and local government professor at the BYU Law School almost thirty years ago. And yes, he was presidential even back then.

Jonathan O. Hafen, president of the BYU Alumni Association, delivered this commencement address on April 26, 2018.

While I was a student, another one of my law professors, Jim Gordon, invited me to be in the bishopric of a student ward a few months after Joy and I had married. While it was slightly intimidating spending the Sabbath with one of my law school professors, that connection during those two years created incredible mentoring that changed my life.

When I studied English here before law school, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland was President Holland to me. He was the president of BYU then. That connection has meant so much to me. How I love him and look forward to hearing from him today, like all of us do.

My most recent BYU connection was at a meeting a couple of weeks ago arranged through the BYU Student Alumni's BYU Connect. I met a wonderful BYU student who is an English major. She hopes to be the first college graduate in her family and someday attend law school. She dreams of becoming a judge in her home state of Minnesota. If she were a stock, I would invest in her dream. She will be a tremendous credit to BYU and to the Church.

Now let us talk about your BYU connections. If you solved one of your religious problems while you were here, congratulations, that is truly an eternal BYU connection. But now think for just a minute about your favorite BYU professors. Think about some of the best friends that you have made while you have been here. If you stay connected with that group, you will be richly rewarded throughout your life. As part of our Heavenly Father's plan, we are happier when we have strong personal connections like those.

An even more extraordinary thought, perhaps, is that some of your most important BYU connections may still lie ahead of you.

It is now my pleasure and my honor today to confer upon each of you a lifetime membership in the BYU Alumni Association. We offer our congratulations and welcome you into this great association of more than 415,000 people. That is a lot of potential BYU connections!

You are now and will always be "connected for good" with some of the most wonderful people in the world. There are nearly 100 BYU alumni chapters throughout the United States in which you can become involved in fun and meaningful BYU-related activities. For those of you who will be staying in the area, we have twenty-one new professional alumni chapters right here along the Wasatch Front. Professional chapters are sponsored by various colleges and departments on campus and offer each of you the opportunity to gather with others from your college as well as to mentor and support current BYU students.

For your BYU connections who will remain here on campus, it is a bittersweet day. It is very hard to see you go, but wonderful things await you! After all, you didn't come to BYU to stay here. You came to BYU to prepare yourself for what lies ahead and then to go out and pursue your dreams. I can think of no better preparation to pursue your dreams than attending BYU.

My dear graduates, thank you for becoming part of my BYU connections. May your positive memories of BYU stay with you throughout your life. May your BYU connections continue to be a strong influence in all that you do. May you know that you will always be welcome here on campus on this consecrated ground. And may God bless each of you and this wonderful university. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.