

Bill gates speech at harvard

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President Bok, former President Rudenstine, incoming President Faust, members of the Harvard Corporation and the Board of Overseers, members of the faculty, parents, and especially, the graduates: I've been waiting more than 30 years to say this: "Dad, I always told you I'd come back and get my degree." I want to thank Harvard for this honour. I'll be changing my job next year ... and it will be nice to finally have a college degree on my resume. I applaud the graduates today for taking a much more direct route to your degrees. For my part, I'm just happy that the Crimson has called me "Harvard's most successful dropout. I guess that makes me valedictorian of my own special class ... I did the best of everyone who failed. One of my biggest memories of Harvard came in January 1975, when I made a call from Currier House to a company in Albuquerque that had begun making the world's first personal computers. I offered to sell them software. I worried that they would realise I was just a student in a dorm and hang up on me. Instead they said: "We're not quite ready, come see us in a month," which was a good thing, because we hadn't written the software yet.

From that moment, I worked day and night on this little extra credit project that marked the end of my college education and the beginning of a remarkable journey with Microsoft. Members of the Harvard Family: Here in the Yard is one of the great collections of intellectual talent in the world. For what purpose? There is no question that the faculty, the alumni, the students, and the benefactors of Harvard have used their power to improve the lives of people here and around the world. But can we do more?

Can Harvard dedicate its intellect to improving the lives of people who will never even hear its name? Let me make a request of the deans and the

professors - the intellectual leaders here at Harvard: As you hire new faculty, award tenure, review curriculum, and determine degree requirements, please ask yourselves: Should our best minds be dedicated to solving our biggest problems? Should Harvard encourage its faculty to take on the world's worst inequities? Should Harvard students learn about the depth of global poverty... the prevalence of world hunger ... the scarcity of clean water ... the girls kept out of school ... the children who die from diseases we can cure? My mother, who was filled with pride the day I was admitted here - never stopped pressing me to do more for others.

A few days before my wedding, she hosted a bridal event, at which she read aloud a letter about marriage that she had written to Melinda. My mother was very ill with cancer at the time, but she saw one more opportunity to deliver her message, and at the close of the letter she said: " From those to whom much is given, much is expected. In line with the promise of this age, I want to exhort each of the graduates here to take on an issue - a complex problem, a deep inequity, and become a specialist on it. If you make it the focus of your career, that would be phenomenal. But you don't have to do that to make an impact. For a few hours every week, you can use the growing power of the Internet to get informed, find others with the same interests, see the barriers, and find ways to cut through them. Don't let complexity stop you.

Be activists. Take on the big inequities. It will be one of the great experiences of your lives. And I hope you will come back here to Harvard 30 years from now and reflect on what you have done with your talent and your energy. I hope you will judge yourselves not on your professional

accomplishments alone, but also on how well you have addressed the world's deepest inequities ... on how well you treated people a world away who have nothing in common with you but their humanity.