



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Office of the President

**Geoffrey S. Mearns
Fall 2018 Commencement Remarks
Worthen Arena
Saturday, December 15, 2018
10 a.m.**

As our commencement ceremony draws to a close, it is an honor to share a few words of advice and encouragement with our graduates.

We are here to celebrate you. But as you know, your academic success is not just the product of your individual effort. Rather, it is the result of the sustained and collective commitment of many people, some of whom are here today.

At Ball State, we have hundreds of distinguished faculty who are dedicated to teaching and to scholarship, and they are dedicated to treating our students as partners in the quest for knowledge and greater understanding. Some of our faculty members are here now wearing academic regalia. This tradition symbolizes their commitment to sharing their knowledge with others, while they continue the search for truth and wisdom.

We also have thousands of talented, supportive staff members who are equally dedicated to your accomplishments. We don't make them dress in caps and gowns, but we know and appreciate their contributions to you and to our University.

And we have trustees who care deeply about your success. Their commitment to our mission is a source of strength for all of us.

Now, to another special group of people who deserve our recognition: your family and friends. These are the men and women who have guided you. They have been there to support you with enthusiastic encouragement, with good advice, and with unconditional love. Graduates, please join me in a round of applause for your families and friends.

Now, to you, our graduates.

You have pursued and obtained this education in order to get a good job and to provide for yourself and for your family. But no matter how you choose to earn a living, please continue to serve your neighbors. As I suspect that you already know, such service is very rewarding.

Throughout your experience at our University, I hope that you have also been challenged to exceed your expectations. Don't settle for being average. Please commit yourself to excellence in everything that you do.

But always remember that professional success and personal satisfaction require more than knowledge and talent. To lead a meaningful life, you must embody certain core values, such as the enduring values articulated in the Beneficence Pledge.

Be sincere, and speak the truth.

Model integrity – and value integrity in others.

Character matters.

And so does heart.

Within each one of you, there is some special motivation that brought you to our University – and that brings you to this place at this time. To arrive at this destination, you have overcome many obstacles. There will be more challenges and some disappointments in the days ahead.

But never forget the dream that brings you here today. Pursue that dream with passion and with courage.

And pursue it with great optimism. We believe in a better future – a world that is more peaceful and more just. We believe in that bright future, because we believe in you.

Finally, on a personal note, please never forget to show your appreciation and your affection for your family and friends – and for all of the other people who have helped you to become the talented women and men that you are. Honor their gifts to you, and repay the debt that you owe them, by sharing your talents and your good fortune with others – with others who need you.

Graduates, good luck. Godspeed.