

Surgeon General gives graduates a "Prescription for Life"

UNCW NEWS BUREAU

Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher addressed the summer and fall 2000 graduating class at Commencement Saturday, Dec. 17. He told the 1,080 graduates that the greatest challenge they will face would be the challenge of change.

Satcher gave each of the graduates a 4-by-6-inch card in red, white and blue containing his four-point prescription for healthy living:

- Moderate physical activity – at least 5 days per week, 30 minutes a day.
- Eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Avoid toxins – tobacco, illicit drugs, and abuse of alcohol.



Date Lockwood: Courtesy of UNCW

Dr. Satcher shared with the graduates his four-point prescription for health living.

-Responsible sexual behavior – abstinence where appropriate.

In addition to encouraging graduates to take care of themselves, Satcher told them to find a faith or belief that will propel them into the future and give them the right attitude toward life. He also urged them to invest in people and treat everyone with respect and dignity.

Satcher invoked his father's comments to him when he was boarding a bus to take him from the cotton fields of Alabama to Morehouse College. His father told him, "always treat everyone with respect and dignity regardless of what they own." Satcher said that as America becomes more diverse, this will be one of the greatest challenges the graduates will face.

UNC system President Molly Corbett Broad also addressed the graduates, focusing on North Carolinians' pride in their university.

"They hold that education is the key to a better life," Broad said, explaining to the audience that public higher education was born in this state 200 years ago. "That pride in education is deeply ingrained in what defines North Carolina – a bedrock belief in the transforming power of education."

Broad reminded the graduates of their birthright, "the opportunity to pursue higher education at an affordable price, a



Date Lockwood: Courtesy of UNCW

Over 1,000 students graduated on Dec. 17 at Trask Coliseum.

birthright that has enabled the sons and daughters of farmhands and millhands to become doctors and business leaders and even university presidents."

Commencement was for approximately 770 students earning bachelor's degrees at the conclusion of the fall semester, approximately 210 students who earned bachelor's degrees during the summer, and approximately 100 master's degree candidates.

Satcher was sworn in as the nation's 16th surgeon general in February 1998. He is only the second person in history to simultaneously hold the positions of surgeon general and assistant secretary of health in the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services. Satcher served as the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry from 1993 to 1998.

A graduate of Morehouse College, Satcher earned his M.D. and Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve in 1970. He did residency/fellowship training at Strong Memorial Hospital, the University of Rochester, UCLA and King-Drew Medical Center. Satcher has received almost two dozen honorary degrees and numerous distinguished awards, including the New York Academy of Medicine Lifetime Achievement Award.

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