

Spring 2017 Commencement Remarks: NSU President Dr. Timothy Downs

As many of you know, this is my first year as president of Northern State University and the first year my wife, Mary, and I have lived in the State of South Dakota. We have the greatest appreciation for Northern and the people of Aberdeen and South Dakota. I continue to be proud to serve Northern and enjoy working tirelessly to assure Northern sustains an exceptional reputation in South Dakota.

The learning community at Northern is a special place, a campus that includes outstanding faculty, staff dedicated to students having a positive experience, and excellent students who are known to work hard and be of assistance to each other's successes.

In addition to today's graduates earning degrees, know that the Northern faculty and staff are proud of your development as students and future leaders. Your efforts to serve the community of Aberdeen and surrounding communities is a point of pride. We know that as you move forward in life you are prepared to succeed professionally and you will make countless contributions to the communities where you reside.

To quote the late President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural speech:

"And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

As we all know, this is a famous quote; more specifically, I suggest that this quote pertains to you as young professionals. We as your educators, mentors and coaches ask you to continue making an impact on the people and infrastructures in the communities where you will reside. We know your efforts will be impactful; these efforts improve the lives of your fellow citizens as well as contribute to the development of the communities where you reside and our nation as a whole.

Just as we are proud of your efforts and accomplishments today, I know we will be proud of you in the future. Thank you for being a part of the Northern community and for all of your efforts to make Northern a cherished place of living and learning.