



**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
SPRING CONVOCATION
JUNE 2, 3, 4, and 5, 2009**

Convocation Address

By Dr. Djavad Mowafaghian

Iranian-Canadian real estate developer and philanthropist.

An honorary Doctor of Laws was conferred on Dr. Djavad Mowafaghian during the Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Applied Sciences Ceremony on Friday, June 5, 2009. The following is Dr. Mowafaghian's convocation address.

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, honoured guests, graduates, ladies and gentleman: It is with great pride and honour for me to participate in this ceremony and meet you, a group of young people who are able, ready and willing to save our beautiful country, Canada, out of this economic mess.

I know that you have just finished your exams and you are tired of speeches, so I decided to tell you a little story.

Once upon a time in a land far far away, a little boy was born in a family who could not afford to buy him a toy. This boy lost his father when he was only one year old and he was brought up by an angel that happened to be his mother. When this boy was very little he used to dream that someday he would be rich enough to buy toys for little kids around the world and take them to movies.

Years past and this boy finished his education and began to work on odd jobs. He was not happy until he established his own construction company. When he began the only capital he had was a great will power to succeed.

In the beginning, this company received some small orders and financially he was in such a bad position that on many occasions he and other people working for him had to share a hamburger so that each would receive one half of a hamburger as dinner. But he never lost hope and worked very hard. Due to bad economics, he became bankrupt two times. Sometimes he had to borrow some small amount of money from loan sharks at a rate of 600% per year—I repeat 600 % per year—for a short time. But he never lost hope.

It was only his hard work and perseverance that helped him to rise to the highest echelon of wealth and power, attainable by an entrepreneur. At that time he remembered his childhood dream, so he began to build 26 schools, including technical schools, schools for the handicapped and less fortunate children, a complete compound for the visually impaired including a

dormitory, primary, and high schools. In that far, far away land today these schools have more than 25,000 students.

That little boy, who never lost his hope, is at the podium now and talking to you, it's me!

You should be proud of this great country, of us, Canada, that has provided you enough to finish your educations and be ready to build this land to become a wealthier and healthier than ever.

Make no doubt, it is a very difficult task, especially because of this international economic mess, but like that little boy, never lose hope and you will make it.

Let us remember that this great democracy has provided you with a bundle of rights and freedoms, including the freedom for your flight to excellence.

Good Luck!

Thank you