

Graduation Speech

Peter Gago AC

Chancellor University of South Australia (Ms Pauline Carr), Vice Chancellor & President (Prof David Lloyd), University Council Members, academic staff, graduands, family and friends.

I would like to acknowledge that the land that we meet on today is the traditional land of the Kurna people, and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their Country.

To those robed in the front of this stage – thank you for inviting me to share your day. I have to say it's a spectacular view from here - the colours, tassels, caps, academic gowns - all timeless symbols, steeped in history and tradition - symbols affirming the level and discipline of your academic achievements.

This important celebration of such a special milestone marks the next phase in your lives - your future! And of course, such achievements and success have been made possible through the strong leadership and management of this wonderful academic institution, UniSA.

This Doctoral award means a great deal to me. I'm both humbled and delighted.

I make wine, or I should say that as Chief Winemaker I work with a team at Penfolds, and we make wine. And occasionally we make quite famous wine! I dare not mention 'Grange', 'St Henri', 'Bin 389' as that would be improper of me, a tad commercial, especially in such august company!

This journey of ours through life is a shared one. In this very fast and competitive world it's humbling to work alongside like-minded colleagues who share goals and friendship, each whom have their own special talents, and quirks!

Wine writer Andrew Jefford wrote in Decanter Magazine only last month:

"Wine is an emotional way to apprehend the beauty of the earth, and is a source of great solace on a daily basis".

I'm a bit more pragmatic and less poetic. I see wine as the ultimate value-add – from a simple grape grown in the right soil, in the right place and the right weather – encapsulated in a bottle. When all are in perfect alignment, a high price-tag and international acclaim may follow. I still marvel at the simplicity yet illusiveness of this paradox.

And of course, SA is the perfect place to craft our wares. Adelaide has recently been declared one of the 'World's Great Wine Capitals' – there are only ten across the globe. I'm honoured to officially be their Global Wine Ambassador. This Doctoral award will add even more kudos to this role which will help provide even greater authority when promoting the Australian Wine Industry to enhance our wine reputation. It also reflects on the important contribution, both economically and socially, that the Wine Industry makes to South Australia, The Wine State.

Today if I were to highlight one theme, it would be the global passport offered to you by **education**. Education has the power to change our world, to transform our past into a better future. It has the power to advance our social and economic potential. It can transcend gender, race and income. Education is everything. You and I are all recipients.

I was the first in my family, migrating from the North of England, to go to University. Yes, I did not come from a winemaking family. In the 1970's I graduated from the University of Melbourne and then in the 80's from Roseworthy, Australia's oldest Agriculture College.

Education has courted every stage of my journey, initially into a career in education as a Maths/Science teacher and then into the world of wine. Education helped catalyse what I could only dream about into a reality. It helped transform what was an after-hours hobby, wine tasting with a group of my teaching colleagues almost 40 years ago. I have to say that as a wine group we were, shall I say, not always particularly discerning, but we did have a lot of fun. And here I am today, a wine maker recognised throughout the world, responsible for Grange! Who would have thought!

During my three decades of winemaking I've been tremendously lucky to have followed in the footsteps of legends from the last millennia, and to work with many great people. I thank them. It was these people who lifted me onto their shoulders, so that I could reach further again. And I see it as a great honour to help lift those who will take over our custodianship to ensure a strong, vibrant wine industry, internationally acclaimed, for generations to come.

In winemaking you accrue many skills, as in many other fields you build upon the innate using life experience, and a life-time of continuing education. So, I'm sorry to say that your learning journey is not over, it has barely begun! However, two traits that may be the most useful to you are resilience and tenacity. Coupled with hard work and focus, pack these into your armoury, if you haven't done so already. Having said this, it's also important that you never lose sight of work-life balance.

A long time ago John Adams quipped:

"There are two educations: One should teach us to earn a living and the other how to live."

They say you know when you're getting older when the Police look young. Well I have to say when at look at those of you graduating in front of me most of you look very, very young! However, I assume most of you are over 18 and are likely to be celebrating your graduation milestone today with family and friends. Without preaching about the proven medical benefits of moderate wine consumption, I'm hoping that your conviviality might be shared with a glass of South Australian wine!

Again, congratulations and I wish you all the very best in all your future pursuits.

My heartfelt thanks,

Cheers.