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University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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Dear Graduates,

Today is a very proud moment for you, your family and friends, and for the University of South Florida. Congratulations on achieving your dream.

We fully appreciate just how hard you worked to reach this milestone. You faced high standards when you entered USF, you have changed in many ways — some obvious, others subtle and nuanced. You have refined your skills in the arts of listening, researching and thinking. You have learned the confidence to challenge ideas, and developed the communications skills necessary to preserve relationships while engaging in dialogue with others.

May your life’s journey never take you far from these principles, and may it bring you frequently back to USF.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Tighe
Acting President and Provost
University of South Florida
The University of South Florida, created in the 20th century to meet the needs of the Tampa Bay metropolitan area and the state of Florida, is driving higher education on a fast track into the new millennium.

Already one of the 20 largest universities in the United States, USF has built a solid reputation as a leader in learning, offering comprehensive, state-of-the-art, student-centered programs. With growing prestige and a dedicated faculty, including 73 Fulbright Scholars and 42 endowed chairs, USF has become a research powerhouse. With its metropolitan focus, USF also is engaged in developing the community and improving the quality of life.

Founded in 1956, USF opened its doors in 1960 to 2,000 students. Today the university serves approximately 34,000 students — with nearly 200 programs at the undergraduate, master's, specialist and doctoral levels, including the M.D. Entering freshmen boast an average SAT score of approximately 1,020 and a grade point average of 3.5. USF's commitment to inclusion is reflected in its student body. African-American, Latin and Asian students comprise 26 percent of USF students. A growing contingent of international students, now representing 142 countries, demonstrates the university's strong geographic influence and dedication to the principles of a global economy.

One of the top 50 public research universities in the country, USF was recently classified, along with the University of Florida and Florida State University, as a Florida Research I University by the Board of Regents, which will enhance its graduate school and research status. USF attracted $161 million in sponsored research, contracts and grants last year and is fast becoming a model urban research university for the 21st century.

Located in vibrant Tampa Bay, one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas of the nation, USF has formed vital partnerships with business leaders and organizations throughout the region, and contributes to the well-being of its immediate urban neighborhoods through networks of social research and service projects.

One of the largest employers in the Tampa area with an annual operating budget of $750 million, USF's economic impact on the Tampa Bay region totals at least $2 billion annually. Altogether, USF's campuses are within reach of more than 3 million people in a 10-county area. In the past 40-plus years, USF has grown into a network of regional campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota and Lakeland, along with a new joint-use site in Pasco County serving the West Central Florida region.

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The University of South Florida is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award degrees at the baccalaureate, masters, specialist and doctoral levels, including the Doctor of Medicine. Events, activities, programs and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity.
The Symbols of Learning

Modern academic regalia evolved from the kinds of apparel worn by monks and students in the 11th and 12th centuries to keep warm in the medieval castles and halls in which they studied. Academic life as we know it today began in the Middle Ages — first in the church, then in the guilds. The teaching guild was the Guild of the Master of Arts, and the Bachelor was the apprentice of the Master. Their dress was the outward sign of stature and responsibility. Academic regalia was thus a visible manifestation — in color, pattern and design — that unified those of common discipline and like purpose. In later centuries, to preserve the regalia’s dignity and meaning, universities set rules of academic dress. American universities agreed on a definite system in 1895, establishing a code of approved attire. In 1932, the American Council on Education revised this code, which, for the most part, governs the style of academic dress today. The principal features of academic dress are three: the gown, the cap and the hood.

THE GOWN — The gown has become symbolic of the democracy of scholarship, for it completely covers any dress of rank or social standing. The sleeves of the gown indicate the level of the degree held by the wearer. A long, pointed sleeve indicates the bachelor’s degree. The master’s gown has an oblong sleeve cut in an arc, with a slit at either the upper arm or wrist. The doctor’s gown has bell-shaped sleeves and may also have velvet facing and sleeve bars or chevrons. The trimming may be black, or it may match the degree color on the gown edging.

THE CAP — The freed slave in ancient Rome won the privilege of wearing a cap, and so the academic cap is a sign of the freedom of scholarship and the responsibility and dignity with which scholarship endows the wearer. Old poetry records the cap of scholarship as a square symbolizing the book, although other authorities claim that it is a mortar board — the symbol of the masons, a privileged guild. The color of the tassel on the cap denotes the discipline. The tassels on the caps (mortar boards) worn by the faculty may be black or a color indicating the degree. Those who hold a doctoral degree may wear a gold tassel. It is traditional for degree candidates to wear their tassels on the right and for those holding degrees to wear them on the left. Graduates transfer their tassels to the left after conferring of the degrees by the President.

THE MACE — The Academic Ceremonial Mace, which is closely related to maces used by ecclesiastical and civil authorities, dates back to at least the 14th century and is derived from the original battle mace that was designed to protect a king and was carried by the royal bodyguard. This symbolism of authority and power has been conveyed to the Academic Mace and signifies the authority of the Chief Executive Officer of the university. The size, shape and design of academic maces vary tremendously. The most common design has a major shaft that is topped with a head and an ornament, with the lower end of the shaft having a terminal finial.

THE MEDALLION — The medallions worn by candidates for the bachelor’s degree identify those graduating with honors. The black hood of a bachelor’s candidate indicates a student who has completed graduation requirements for the University-wide Honors Program.

THE SASH — The golden-colored sash is made available to students who are members of university honors societies. The sash is embroidered with the university seal and the student’s honors society.

THE HOOD — The hoods are lined with the official colors of the institution conferring the degree. They are edged and bound with velvet of the color appropriate for the degree. At USF, the lining of the hood is green with a gold chevron, representing the university's colors. Among the trimming colors of hoods worn by our faculty today are:

- Apricot — Nursing
- Blue (Dark) — Philosophy
- Blue (Light) — Education
- Blue (Peacock) — Public Administration
- Brown — Fine Arts
- Citron — Social Work/Criminology/Rehab. Counseling
- Crimson — Journalism/Communication
- Drab — Business
- Golden Yellow — Science
- Green — Medicine
- Lemon Yellow — Library Science
- Orange — Engineering
- Pink — Music
- Salmon — Public Health
- Scarlet — Theology
- Violet — Architecture
- White — Arts and Letters
ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS ORDER OF EXERCISES
Thomas Tighe, Presiding

PRELUDI CONCERT
The Florida Orchestra Brass Quintet
Pomp and Circumstance
Elgar (please stand)

PROCESSIONAL
Jesse Binford
University Commencement Marshah

NATIONAL ANTHEM
Susan Holsonback
USF St. Petersburg Student

GREETINGS
H. William Heller
Campus Executive Officer and Dean

REMARKS
Thomas Tighe

STUDENT REFLECTIONS
Timothy L. Lenaheh
President, Student Government

OUTSTANDING SENIORS
Dean Heller

OUTSTANDING GRADUATE
Ronnie Beck
Pinellas County Alumni Chapter President

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
Gus Stavros
USF Foundation Chair and Capital Campaign Co-chair
Chairman, PELAM Investments

CONFERRING OF GRADUATE DEGREES
Thomas Tighe

CONFERRING OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREES
Thomas Tighe

CLOSING REMARKS
Dean Heller

ALMA MATER
Ms. Holsonback

RECESSIONAL
The Florida Orchestra Brass Quintet
Trumpet Tune
Purcell
Dr. Gus Stavros
COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Dr. Gus Stavros is a highly regarded entrepreneur and philanthropist whose passionate commitment to education and the arts is second to none. Stavros and his wife, Frances, are deeply involved in many aspects of community life throughout the Tampa Bay area.

They arrived in Florida in 1958 to start a business forms manufacturing company in Pinellas County. In the ensuing 30 years, Stavros built the company into the largest forms manufacturer in the Southeast. Better Business Forms was sold in 1989 and Stavros retired to serve the community in education, culture and other charities.

He has served as chairman of the International Business Forms Industries Association and on the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of Printing Industries of America, and has been honored as a member of the Black Leaf Society of the IBFI and the Ash Khan Society of the Printing Industries of America.

As a spirited advocate of education, he currently serves as chairman of USF's Foundation Board of Trustees and is co-chairman of USF's Capital Campaign, Great Achievements • Great Expectations. He has also served as chairman of the Eckerd College Board of Trustees, chairman of Florida State University Foundation Board of Trustees, chairman of the Florida Council on Economic Education, charter chairman and chairman emeritus of the Pinellas County Education Foundation, and chairman of the Florida Foundation for Excellence in Education.

The Gus A. Stavros Institute administers Enterprise Village of Pinellas County, a nationally prominent facility in the teaching of free enterprise and the U.S. economic system to approximately 14,000 fifth-graders annually. A $4-million expansion of the Institute will now teach fiscal responsibility to all eighth-graders and ethics and career planning to high school students in Pinellas County.

Stavros has served as chairman and president of the Performing Arts Center and Theatre (Ruth Eckerd Hall) and on the board of the Florida Council of 100, GTE of Florida and many others.

He has received many honors and awards, including Florida Free Enterpriser of the Year, 1982, Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame, 1991, the United Way Humanitarian Award, the NCCJ Brotherhood Award, the USF Alumni Association Class of '56 Award, the National Private Enterprise Education Award, Mr. Clearwater 1987, Mr. Sun (St. Petersburg) 1994, and the Liberty Bell Awards from both the Clearwater and St. Petersburg bar associations.

He received honorary doctorates in Humane Letters from USF in 1996 and FSU in 1991. The Free Enterprise and Economic Education Centers at USF and FSU are named in his honor.

The Stavros' celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary in March. They have three accomplished children: Paul, Mark and Ellen, and two grandchildren.