

**Reading Hospital School of Health Sciences
Medical Laboratory Science Program
2021 Commencement Speech by Min Lee
June 11, 2021**

Dr. Rahn, Ethan - Thank you for the opportunity to be here. Let me first congratulate each of you for accomplishing this major milestone in your life.

As I was preparing to be here with you all this morning, I recalled the day of my graduation and how I felt. And then, I remembered how much I fear public speaking and nearly had a panic attack - so, if I pass out up here, go ahead and take me across the street to the ED. I've already given them a heads up.

In all seriousness, I remember feeling an immense sense of accomplishment, excitement intermingled with sheer exhaustion and anxiousness. I remember looking around at my classmates wondering where their journey would take them in life and what was in store for me in the coming years. If any of you are also looking ahead to the future, I'd like to invite you to come back to this moment - This is one of the many lessons that I have learned over the years. Keeping your eye on the horizon robs you of the opportunity to see and feel joy in the present.

So, let's reflect on this moment.

This has, undoubtedly, been one of the most challenging years of your lives. No matter how old or young you are - this pandemic has redefined what "normal" looks and feels like. A reality that has certainly been magnified for those of us in the healthcare community.

When I started my career in healthcare nearly 12 years ago, I never imagined I'd be leading a team through a global pandemic that would ravage the entire world and flip our lives upside down.

But each of you, in the face of this global pandemic, has intentionally chosen a career in healthcare. During the past year at Reading, I'm sure each of you has seen up close and personal, the challenges and the incredible pressure the pandemic placed on lab operations. You also probably saw the personal stressors it placed on the team.

Here's the thing - I didn't know I was running into the fire - but you all - you saw the fire, and said, I want to do my part; I'm running in. When I take a moment to think about this, I am truly in awe of each of you. That's what this world needs. That's what life takes. Running in and showing up when most people won't. The choices you make in these moments are what define where you will go in life, and I am grateful for this opportunity to stand with you and be a part of this defining day. I hope you all are as proud of yourselves as I am proud of you.

There will be times in your career where you will feel doctors and nurses get all the glory. However, remember this - medical lab scientists are some of the most important members of our healthcare community.

Information is only as powerful as our ability to analyze and understand it. As medical lab scientists, the vital information you provide is the keystone in the healthcare bridge between diagnosis and lifesaving patient care.

There isn't a single patient that walks through the doors at Reading Hospital or any other hospital or clinic in this country that isn't touched by the work of medical lab scientists. From the mother-to-be, to the

cancer patient, or someone coming for a routine checkup - medical lab scientists play a pivotal role in providing hope and transforming lives.

And yet, there will be days when your work and life will feel routine, and although it is unlikely that any of us in this room will encounter a situation that catapults us to national hero status, we can still make an extraordinary impact on someone else's life. The key is to find the small moments to make a difference, and never waiting for someone to give you permission to make that difference.

Many of you know Danielle Worth in Flow Cytometry. Back in June of last year, we had a patient with a history of acute leukemia. The pathologist was working up the tissue mass biopsy for myeloid sarcoma which, I'm told, is what acute leukemia can do in other tissues. Even though we were looking for myeloid sarcoma, Danielle found a tiny population consistent with small cell carcinoma in the bone marrow, and she immediately let the pathologist know. We were able to add testing for small cell carcinoma to the other tissue biopsy, and that testing for small cell carcinoma was positive. Danielle saved days of diagnostic delay and had an extraordinary impact on the care this patient received.

I ask you to look for your moments to make a difference and seize those moments.

So, with this, as you take your place in the trenches and join with your brothers and sisters on the frontline, never forget your part and your role in the Healer's Oath.

As Emily Dickinson wrote,

If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain; If I can ease one life the aching, Or cool one pain, Or help one fainting robin Unto his nest again, I shall not live in vain.

Congratulations again to all of you. Embrace your calling. Empower your peers. Fight the good fight. And, Keep Calm and Pipette On.

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