



Ceremony Speaker
The University of Toledo
Spring Commencement 2015
Sunday, May 10th - 2:00 a.m.

Mr. Roy Armes

Highlights of Mr. Arme's accomplishments:

- Appointed as the Chief Executive Officer and President of Cooper Tire and Rubber Company in 2006. One year later he was appointed Chairman.
- Earned his B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from The University of Toledo in 1975
- For the next 31 years, he worked in a variety of positions at The Whirlpool Corporation in the areas of engineering, manufacturing, gTgm TJ0 Tw ()TjEMC VBody KICID 28 BDC 7T3 1 Tf1.639 -2.317 Td(o)Tj7T2 1 Tf0.601 C
- In 2009, he and his wife, Marcia, were instrumental in establishing the Engineering Leadership Institute (ELI) in the UT College of Engineering to assist undergraduate engineering students in gaining critical leadership skills to complement their academic skills.
- Committed to a number of community organizations including service with the Alzheimer's Association.



**University of Toledo Commencement Address – AFTERNOON CEREMONY Roy Armes
Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President Cooper Tire & Rubber Company To be
delivered May 10, 2015**

What to take with you. What to leave behind.

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you, Chairman Zerby, for that kind introduction. My appreciation also to the members of the Board, and a very special thank you to Dr. Naganathan. Nagi, it has been my pleasure to get to know you as we have worked together on several projects here at the University. You are truly an amazing leader, educator and person. I've valued your support and friendship over the years.

Of course, I also want to especially congratulate the more than 1,000 graduates who are the reason we are here today! Being a parent, I would be remiss if I did not ask each of the graduates to give a big round of applause to your parents, family members educators and friends—especially the Moms who are celebrating Mother's Day with us today. Grads, give these folks a hand...they deserve recognition right along with you.

As I prepared to come here today, I thought about how I felt back in 1975 when I was in your position. I had just completed my mechanical engineering degree here at UT, and as I sat for graduation, I had an odd feeling in the pit of my stomach. It's a feeling some of you may find very familiar right now ... a cross between total elation (It's Miller time!) and desperation (What the heck am I going to do now...will I make it in the world...will I end up happy and fulfilled?)

For me, this feeling was perhaps even more intense. My graduation was just about four months from my wedding day to my wonderful wife Marcia. Now, 40 years of marriage and two sons later, Marcia was the best decision of my life. UT was a close second, though.

Big life transitions have a way of forcing emotions and questions to the surface. Whether it's graduation, marriage, career choices, retirement, or whatever, when we hit a major pivot point, we often take a mental inventory and decide

degree here at UT about 10 years before I did, and was working for Whirlpool Corporation. But he was on campus here recruiting, and eventually persuaded me to join Whirlpool as my first job out of college. He later became President and Vice Chairman of that company, spending 34 years there.

Once I arrived at Whirlpool, Bill was always there for me...helping me achieve my goals and giving great advice. It was not always what I wanted to hear, but it was always honest feedback with my best interest at heart. Because of his guidance, I stretched my capabilities in ways I would not have done on my own. Today, we still talk from time to time and he remains a positive force in my life.

So, keep the connections you've made with people here—they represent unique ties that you may find valuable and irreplaceable later. When it comes down to it, the world is about people. Keep your connections with those who have been part of your journey here wherever life takes you.

The second thing I want you to take with you is your **Integrity**.

As you've studied for your degree, you have been immersed in the theoretical—you've been taught the professional way to do things and the ethical considerations in your field of study. Yet, you have not yet been tested in the world of work where theory can clash harshly with reality. Ethical lines can become "blurred," "compromises" can be made and "gray areas" can appear.

While I'm certainly not suggesting that you become an inflexible autocrat, I am telling you that blurry lines, compromises and gray areas can very easily become **ill-advised decisions**, questionable ethics and even unlawful actions. I've witnessed how easily even some of the best people have been undone ... not because they set out to do the wrong thing ... but more often because they **slid** into it. It can be surprisingly easy to justify things based on success pressures or financial lures if you do not keep your head on straight and your integrity intact.

So, please, take with you the clarity you have today in what you know is right and what you know is wrong. One of my favorite sayings—used often by my mentor—is that there is "no right way to do a wrong thing." Even after decades in the work world—I often call on this phrase as a touchstone. Never compromise your integrity.

A third thing I recommend you take with you is your **Guts**.

not think I was up to this task so early in my career. I did not feel ready for it and thought it was way too much for me.

In fact, my boss at the time joked that at any given moment, more people at the new facility would be in the restroom than the total of the workforce at my current operation. Even though every fiber in my body told me to run from this assignment, at the advice of my mentor, I ended up pushing past the fear and taking on the assignment ... and I succeeded. I cannot tell you how valuable that experience was for me. It taught me a big lesson ... take steps forward and embrace risk even if you don't know exactly what's ahead. Be fearless and confident... be bold and stay gutsy.

What to Leave Behind

OK, now that we've talked about what to take with you, when you wake up tomorrow with your diploma fresh in hand, what should you leave behind? I have two thoughts for you.

The first is **Selfism...in other words, the "me...me...me"**

There are multiple meanings of this word, but the Oxford dictionary describes selfism as "a concentration on one's own interests or self-absorption." Now, before you boo me or throw rotten tomatoes, give me a chance to explain. Like most things in life, this has positive and negative aspects. Or, better put by Dr. Phil, "No matter how flat you make a pancake, it still has two sides."

Anyway, up to this point in your life, most of you have been rightly concentrated on yourself. You've been focusing on your learning, what you want to do with your life, how you fit in with others and what makes you happy. At UT, you've worked incredibly hard for the best grades you could get, taken internships or co-op experiences, and anything else that positioned you for the best job after graduation. This focus on yourself has been a natural, and even admirable, part of your existence.

But on the flip side, our culture today has an obsessive focus on self that I fear could get in the way of you becoming all you want to be and can be in life. I cannot believe I'm saying this to the generation who invented "selfies," but in all honesty, this is a great time for you to leave selfism behind.

Here's why ... when you land your dream job, you will be working with and for others. This time, it won't be temporary like working together for a class or during an internship. Now, you'll be working long term

with people who are not like you. There will be older people, people of different ethnicities, people you find weird or intimidating, people you love, people less talented but with more power, and people much smarter and more accomplished than you are. Trust me, you are going to derive some form of benefit—even if it is learning what not to do—from working with every single one of these people if you put yourself aside and see others more completely as individuals with something to offer.

Most important, you'll need to figure out how you are going to work with these wonderful and yet very different people to solve problems and be successful as a team—without you at the center of the universe. It may sound trite, but the power of teamwork is a lesson you learn only when you change your focus from an inward perspective to an outward perspective. Companies are looking for and recruiting talent that can work the best in teams and appreciate the diversity of the individual.

As you do this, also include the idea of giving back to your communities as part of your outward focus. Many of you already do this in some form. While you are the generation of selfies, you are also the

With that, you've got my shortlist of what to take with you into the future and what you can kick to the curbside and leave behind:

- Cherish the people you've connected with
- Never compromise your integrity
- Stay bold and gutsy
- Forget the "me" and learn to celebrate the "we"
- Drop small thinking and dare to dream BIG!

If this list doesn't resonate with you...make your own list. The important thing is that you think about it. Because as you get ready for the next leg of your journey, you'll want to pack lightly, taking only the right stuff along with you as you leave the rest behind.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today. Congratulations faculty, parents, and especially students. The world's waiting for you. Now go get 'em!