



Miami Northwestern Commencement 2012

**Given by Mark B. Rosenberg
on June 6, 2012**



*This speech was presented to Miami Northwestern's Graduating Class of 2012
on June 6, 2012*

Stand and Stare! Your class-song tells you what you must do! You must leave footprints – according to Beyonce in her hit song: “I was Here.” Today I stand before you class of 2012 to challenge you! To leave footprints! Your graduation today is a statement about the opportunity that you have to leave footprints! It is about the intention of your superintendent, Alberto Carvalho, your principal Wallace Aristide, and your hard-working teachers to give you the opportunity to leave footprints.

At FIU, we know that this is so important. Family members, loved ones of this class. You see this university understands the urgency. We are proud of the partnership that we have with the Bulls of Miami Northwestern Senior High, and we’re working together to ensure that you can get a college education We are not alone – we have a thousand faculty members and 3000 staff who want you here – at FIU! We are not alone – we have a global bank – JP Morgan Chase, underwriting many of our shared efforts to get you to this promised land! And look at what we have done together – just this year! Forty-nine Bulls attended a financial literacy program at our College of Business Administration’s State Farm Financial Literacy Lab. Through your outstanding work, five of you were selected to be investment fund managers. These five students, all of whom are graduating today: **Marcus Ghent, Rene C. Maurice, Jasmine McMillian, Janis St. Fort and Cliffaniqua Towbridge.** They traveled to New York with their teacher, the inspirational Ms. Rhonda Lewis.

In New York, these students attended the Quinnipiac G.A.M.E. finance conference, a prestigious national investment competition and educational conference. They were the first high school students to ever attend this conference. The fact that high school students were able to have this incredible experience is a testament to the power of education. It is a testament to what you can do; You can turn the impossible into the inevitable; You can achieve your dreams through opportunities, hard work and determination. You can leave footprints, as Beyonce commands you to do! WE are very proud of the dual enrollment programs that have been established. For example, to name just a few, some of today's graduates, like **Marlene Mesador, Brittney Kelly,** and soon-to-be FIU Panthers **Romario Sylvain** and **Angie Fleurissant** will all enter college at least a semester ahead and, for some, as sophomores! And our partnership has paved the way for the first- ever FIU Golden Scholars Bridge Program. Through this program, 17 Miami Northwestern graduates will become FIU students, beginning this summer. Congratulations and a big FIU welcome to our Golden Scholars and to all of the Northwestern graduates who have chosen FIU. I look forward to seeing you on campus! But you can leave footprints elsewhere! Miami Dade College is a fine institution; they want you too....and then you can enroll at FIU!

And so we end where we began: Your school creed commands you to "...believe that every right implies a responsibility, every opportunity an obligation, every possession a duty. Your possession today: a high school degree! The duty: as your class song and we command: Leave Footprints!

Congratulations to the entire Northwestern class of 2012!