

Commencement 2006
Haigazian University
June 30, 2006

PRESIDENT'S WORD OF WELCOME

It is such a joy to stand here today and celebrate with all of you a precious harvest of Haigazian University.

It is a joy to have as wings, our graduating students through whom a university can reach many heights.

It is an imperative to have as backbone our core faculty, and as limbs our staff ably distributed in all places and tasks.

It is a duty to have as quality assurors, the community around us, as officials, supporting bodies, friends, and families so that we may reassure them that what happens in the university is worth following and supporting, and that we, at the institution, may feel we are always accountable to them in our policies, practices, and attitudes.

It is our utmost calling, to have as our reason for existence the open skies of the Creator in whose grace all goodness abounds.

Am I artistically introducing the By-Laws of Haigazian to you, or am I also dreaming of a Lebanon and a world where commitment to serve others, real accountability to God and humanity, and where a zeal for quality of spirit, mind, body, and action take root?

Dear graduating friends, when I reviewed my notes of the past years, I realized that we have rightly put much emphasis on the role of the community in shaping your lives, and your future role in shaping your communities. But Lebanon needs a healthy balance between community and individual citizens. Remember, life is much more than symbols and allegiances. We do not prepare the young generation so that they may hide their vices behind their communities. We want to prepare the young

so that they may lead their communities in the ways of “truth, freedom, and service”.

At this moment, and even though you are all united under the name of the Class of 2006, I will add that you are all here because of the accomplishments of each one of you as an individual, and therefore, you will be expected to give and achieve as individuals, no matter what community you belong to.

Communities are foundations, and communities are the media of future life, but it is my duty to remind you that good communities are also the ones that prepare good individuals, and empowered and respected personalities. The real value of a community is not judged by what its members do to each other, but mostly by what they do to those outside their circles and communities.

We are all proud of a rich past heritage; but the heritage should be an empowering factor for the future and for others. We can feel fulfilled and proud of the past, but cannot be satisfied with it. The future needs not only foundations, but the right commitments, the right energy, the right zeal, the right orientation, the right spirit, and the right education. Therefore, as you trust God, your family, your community, and your support system, be mindful of what is expected of each one of you independently of all else.

It is our hope that the multi-faceted learning that you enjoyed at Haigazian will not be stored in the closets where course notes and exam papers will be find space, but that each graduate will help transform his/her community with genuine involvement, spiritual vigor, openness to more learning, and search for excellence.

And with these ideas, I feel it is most appropriate to introduce our guest speaker of the day whose life and accomplishments are a testimony of the strength of the value system I have just described.

ARAM V. CHOBANIAN

Dr. Aram V. Chobanian has served as President of Boston University, Dean of the School of Medicine, and Provost of the Boston University Medical Campus. He founded the Whitaker Cardiovascular Institute at the Boston University School of Medicine in 1973, and oversaw its rapid development into a center for pioneering research into the biological and clinical aspects of cardiovascular disease. Boston University recently awarded him with an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters.

Dr. Chobanian has received numerous awards for his basic and clinical research on cardiovascular diseases. These include the First Lifetime Achievement Award in Hypertension of the American Heart Association, and the Award of Merit of the American Heart Association. He recently chaired the Seventh Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation and Treatment of High Blood Pressure of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. He has published more than 250 papers and two books, and currently chairs the Publications Committee of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Dr. Chobanian has been involved in several programs to improve health care in Armenia. He is a Foreign Member of the Armenian National Academy of Science.

During his six day stay at Haigazian University our guest has been accompanied by his wife, Jasmine.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Dr. Chobanian.