



**UNC System Interim President Bill Roper
Remarks to Graduates
UNC – Chapel Hill
COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES
May 12, 2019
Chapel Hill, North Carolina**

Good morning, everyone.

And congratulations to the graduates. I am honored by Chancellor Guskiewicz' invitation to speak to you today.

It is a privilege to bring greetings on behalf of the entire University of North Carolina System – almost 300,000 students, staff and faculty, across our state.

This joyous occasion is a celebration of your achievement – and it is also an annual celebration of the founding of American public higher education – here in Chapel Hill – two and a quarter centuries ago.

I want to thank the staff and faculty whose hard work, dedication, innovation and expertise are daily showing our nation and the world what a great global public university can be – and how it benefits our entire state and beyond.

When our son, who also is a graduate today, was in elementary school, they had a tradition of walking across a small wooden bridge, symbolically making the point that they were going from first grade to second grade, etc.

Today you are crossing a bridge too. I wish you the very best in whatever lies ahead for you. My career has been one surprising thing after another. May you also have many happy surprises.

Finally, to all the mothers here and beyond, who have made this day possible for all of us – **HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!**

Thank you.