

Stewart Field House
May 6, 2007



The most memorable phrase of Commencement 2007 was pronounced by President Dick Merriman as waving programs undulated through the dense, humid air of Stewart Field House. "We're under a tornado watch," he told the hundreds of relatives and friends gathered to watch their loved ones' proud moment. With that, irritation at the ceremony's indoor location disappeared. Less than 48 hours earlier a Kansas town had disappeared off the map, and the memory of the Greensburg tornado weighed heavily.

Still, in spite of seating and climate control limitations, graduates celebrated their achievement gratefully. Some were first-generation college students; others were accepting master's degrees hard-earned over years of study.

And when Paul Bean, vice president for institutional advancement, marked his place in the agenda with "I'm the last speaker!" the applause that greeted his announcement was applause of completion. "Alumni have been cheering for you," he told the graduates. "You have been there in their thoughts, actions, prayers, and gifts."



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