



REMARKS BY MIKE MAHER, ATTORNEY
WITH BUSET AND PARTNERS LLP AND A
2007 RECIPIENT OF THE JOSHUA DYKE
SCHOLARSHIP

I wanted to start these remarks by thanking Bonnie, MJ, and Leslie for bringing me back into the Thunder Bay Community Foundation. It is through their diligent leadership, along with the work of the Board, and generosity of the donors and benefactors of the foundation that we are able to be here and to celebrate the remarkable work of these graduates.

My name is Mike Maher, and I'm a former Joshua Dyke Family Scholarship winner. After graduating from St. Pat's in 2007, I attended the University of Toronto and then Windsor Law. I now have returned home to practice at Buset & Partners where I carry on a practice in Corporate, Tax, Aboriginal, and Real Estate Law. I'm delighted to return home and be a part of this community, something that I hope that many of you will eventually choose to do.

Before I get too into these remarks, I wanted to take a moment to recognize my Mother, Bonita Maher who is with us today. Without her generous spirit, devotion, and lessons she's taught me, I'm confident that I would not be in a position to be speaking to you today.

I'm hoping you'll all do me the honour of allowing me to give you some unsolicited advice. With nearly ten years of post-secondary experience under my belt, there are a few things that, (until Bonnie pulls me off this podium), I'm hoping to share with you.

If I remember correctly from that first summer out of high school I received a lot of unsolicited advice—so get used to it.

My first piece of advice is that it is possible that you will not continue with the path you are currently on. This is OKAY. You're all very, very young, and you may realize that you're meant to be something other than you think you're about to become. You are naïve. I promise you you are naïve. I was going to be an actuary, then in government, then I was going to cook for a living... until I eventually went to law school. ITS OKAY you'll figure it out.

Two things I want to get you thinking about today is how you're going to BUILD AND LEAD.

Building is easy. You've been doing it for years now. One foot in front of the other, towards that next goal, that next degree, that next promotion. Conventional building is easy to think about. What is also important, however, is the need to build the rest of your life.

Build a network, that is diverse and inclusive of new thoughts, ideas, and worldviews. My time at the University of Toronto put me face-to-face with cultures, ideas, and people that my formative years in Thunder bay never showed me. Those have helped immensely to shape the way I tackle problems on a daily basis.



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Surround yourself with people you look up to, that impress you, that encourage you, whether they are your peers, or your superiors. Help them out and they will always be there to ensure you succeed.

Build a skill set that allows you excel at what you put your mind to. Keep building. When you think you're done—keep building.

When you've gotten to the end of the path, and look back at all you've built, turn around and build more.

This job is never done. Constantly build your network, your skills, and yourself. If you've truly finished building, reach out to someone else and teach them how to do what you just did

Mentorship is crucial to the continued success to our society, and the continued building of your personal network.

As soon as you can, start to support, guide, and assist those who come after you. I promise you will see the fruits of your labour in that person.

Secondly, I want to encourage you all to lead.

I believe this is even more important than the building—because we will all be relying upon you.

You are the top of your class. You have done what it takes to get here, and you will undoubtedly apply that to your future.

However, without leadership, your skills will not benefit your peers, your networks, nor your community.

You need to allow yourself to step forward, recognizing that your skills and experience give you the privilege of having the capacity to lead. If you don't do it, someone much less qualified to lead will—and once that downward spiral takes over...well, I'm sure you've heard of Donald Trump.

What do I mean by lead? No—I don't mean you all should become the Republican Party's Candidate for President of the United States.

By LEAD, I mean I want to encourage you to LEAD ANYTHING really—

It could be that you decide to step up and organize your friends' next movie night

Nurture your Passion, Building our Community, Creating a Legacy



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It could be that you want to make sure everyone knows about a particular cause near-and-dear to your heart.

It could be that you recognize an injustice, and you have the courage and conviction to speak truth to power.

It could be that you want to start something that revolutionizes the way we approach art, life, tech, politics, commerce, literature: whatever.

Leadership is the ability to step out in front of a crowd and decide that this is the way you're headed. It takes guts, it takes conviction, and it takes a little bit of foolishness.

But if you don't do it—who will?

These awards recognize your excellence among your peers. They recognize that you each have the capacity to go out, to achieve, and to accomplish things—don't be selfish and waste that talent on yourselves. Because if you don't do it, someone else will...and judging by the folks I'm looking at in the room, that someone else might be significantly less able, significantly less built up, and significantly less impactful than each of you are.

I hope to leave you with a true sense of obligation. You have the talent; you have the skills. If you're not the leaders of your generation, of your peers, and of your communities, who will be?

For the benefit of everyone, your city, your country, your family, your peers, and especially yourselves. I hope you take what I've just said to heart: BUILD and LEAD.

I want to thank everyone again for allowing me the opportunity and honour to come and speak to you today. Never hesitate to come by and talk to me tonight, or at any time in the future—I'm always just an email away.