

Greg and Olivia Yuel

(Honorary Doctor of Laws)

June 4, 2025:

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the legislature of the province and with the consent of the Senate of this university, I admit you to the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa and invest you with all the powers, rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

There's you Greg.

Well it is my distinct pleasure to call upon Dr. Yuel and Dr. Yuel to the podium for their remarks. Greetings. We proudly acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis and the Lakota and the Dakota. Madame Chancellor, President Stoicheff, Board of Governors, members of faculty and graduates.

Congratulations to you all. Well done. You have just spent the last three or four or five or six or more years focusing on your schoolwork and sport and culture.

You have deservedly and intentionally been selfish. Maybe you had a part-time or full-time job but intentionally the world revolved around you as it should be. What you were doing is critically important to you and will shape your life forever. When we graduated in 1993 we were living on our own focused on school and our respective sport, me on track, Greg on football. As soon as we finished our last exams we moved to Edmonton where Greg had gotten a job at a trucking company and we had a baby. Greg quickly got involved in the Edmonton football community. He found a group of friends who together resurrected a football program at Kona High School. Eventually I got involved with the running community and was asked by a friend to volunteer with her coaching track. Greg continued with different levels of football while I taught pre and post-natal fitness classes and volunteered organizing fun runs.(...) We were blown away by this honour initially confused because we believe we've just been doing our part, chipping in, building community in our areas of interest.(...) There it is, that's our singular message to you. That's what we ask of you. Do good, get involved, build a community in which you want to live in and start now. When we returned to Saskatoon in 2000 we brought our volunteer interests with us. Greg joined his friends and started coaching football at Walter Murray. He also got involved with the hilltops. I helped BrainSport with their learn to run clinics including the Hope Cancer Centre's learn to run 5k program. Together with our family and friends we also organized Rick Hansen wheels in motion events. These are basic contributions and each and every one of you can and should and possibly already are involved in a volunteer capacity within

your own interest. But with great power comes great responsibility. You are U of S grads. You're smart, hard-working, you're collaborative and pioneering. You have been taught how to learn and taught how to communicate and taught how to teach.

You are from a relatively small community where any one person matters.

So expect more from yourself than chipping in and doing something that anyone could do. This university produces leaders. When I worked in Alberta there was a saying, you know what they call someone from Saskatchewan working in Alberta? Boss.

And it's true. Look at our alumni list. Edward School of Business alumni list, university College of Law alumni list to look at what our alumni are doing.

In the mid 2000s we began to up our game and take responsibility to lead a few significant initiatives that our success in business and influence in the community required of us. Olivia brought Start to Finish to Saskatoon and involved our entire family and friends. It is an after-school activity and reading program for inner city students. This program provided a safe place for kids after school and the year-end event culminated in a 5k run that was organized with the Saskatoon Police Service. I got thrown in front of Gordie House Sport Complex to raise funds and the Jim Patterson Children's Hospital Foundation to raise funds and together we got involved in the Remi Modern campaign. We took our family to Africa, to India, to Ecuador and volunteered with we.org. I helped start flag football and helped add kinsmen tackle football teams to Saskatoon. We chipped in on the Saskatchewan Rough Riders campaign and for Mosaic Stadium and that led to being on the board of the riders which led to being on the board of governors of the CFL. Olivia helped with the Princess Shop. Together we got involved in Wanaskewin capital campaign and then found the Artist in Residence program and jumped on with that. But here's like an example of what we want you to expect from yourselves. A few years ago we went to Rwanda and we saw the power of a bicycle and how it could change the life and the destiny of a family. We asked ourselves what can we do? How can we help get more bicycles to people they're trying to improve their lives? So Google World Bicycle Relief because we found, we came back, started talking to family and friends and and we found World Bicycle Relief and together with the bike doctor here in Saskatoon we reached out to friends, we broadcast the message, we held small info sessions and then we agreed to match the donations that would come in. Trek, the bike manufacturer, matched our donations from Saskatoon. We held small events and one bike donated by someone turned into four bikes delivered and that's it. It's simple. We did something about what we saw. We built a group and we put our time and our money toward it and how is that different than any of the group work that you've participated in while earning your degree? We collaborated, we communicated, we listened, we learned, we made an effort to make a difference and you are from a relatively small community

where contribution from any one person matters. So please get out and establish yourselves and quickly find a community to participate in and then level up. In keeping with the leadership excellence the University of Saskatchewan has prepared you for. Work hard, make a difference. Thank you. Good luck. We'll be seeing you.