

**GRADUATION CEREMONY - OCCASIONAL ADDRESS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA AUGUST 4TH**

Ms Megan Lloyd

Thank you Deputy Chancellor. Distinguished platform party, friends, guests and the very reason for our presence here today — you the graduates.

It is an honour to be here. And I am grateful to all of you for allowing me to be a part of your graduation.

As a journalist. And a newspaper editor – it's a little surprising to find myself speaking at such a prestigious event such as this today - given I come from a profession being journalism that is usually associated with the lower dregs of humanity – whose share of the public trust is the lowest of the low - down there with used-car salesmen, real estate agents and politicians, although slightly better than lawyers.

Of course those sorts of surveys are also reported by journalists, so they could also all be wrong.

I also come from a news media - being newspapers - which everyone seemingly is trying to kill off at the moment - “the end is nigh for newspapers” seems to be the doomsayers chant of relish.

So take one last look at this old relic of the past a Sunday newspaper editor because there may not be too many of me in the future to kick around.

Lately I've taken to saying I was born in 32BG – Before Google.
What did we ever do before it?

I went to uni straight from school after Year 12 and I had never used a computer. My first day of uni - we used a typewriter.

Not so long ago – a mobile was something that hung over a baby's cot.

Webs were for spiders. Twitter was something only birds did.

MySpace was your bedroom. In your parents' house.

Here's an aside about MySpace: The social networking website MySpace has 200 million registered users – A bright spark has worked out that if MySpace was a country it would be the 5th largest in the world, between Indonesia and Brazil.

Last time I attended a uni graduation it was my own. The last time, I sat where you're now sitting. That last time, I was 21. I had three years of uni, three years of working in a department store and four months working as a cadet reporter. I also had a bad spiral perm. Now my hair is straight.

I don't actually remember who gave the graduation speech that day. Which means neither will you in about two decades – or 10 minutes. So I stand here with the full expectation that I will soon be forgotten.

Writing a graduation speech is a daunting task.

There's a sudden desire to have a Barack Obama moment, you know to make some inspiring statement or call to action.

Memorable graduation speeches are just a Google search away, and before you know it the draft is full of great one-liners from - past American presidents, every dead Kennedy, Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize winners and even Hollywood actors – like Bradley Whitford, the actor who played Josh Lyman in the TV series, The West Wing. His graduation advice was “You'll be judged by your gallop, not by your stumble”. I think that's code for it's not the mistakes that you make it's what you do with your life.

The biggest trap for a graduation speech is reverting to cliches - about the future – especially the one about how your future lies ahead of you. Oh really?

I've worked for my employer News Limited for 17 unbroken years.

Today it's expected that school students will have at least 10 jobs before they turn 40.

We are currently preparing kids for jobs that don't yet exist using technologies that haven't been invented in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet.

That comes from a great video on You Tube called "Did you Know" that is full of such facts: China will soon become the number one English-speaking country in the world. The 25pc of India's population with the highest IQs, is greater than the entire population of the US.

1 out of 8 couples who married in the US last year, met online.

The amount of new technical information being created is doubling every two years. And so on, and so on.

All this change sounds incredibly overwhelming – too large to imagine.

In the face of it, let's focus on things which we can have some control over: like ourselves for instance.

In all aspects of our life there is always a fork in the road a minimum of two options to choose from. Most of us will make more wrong choices than right ones. But as the philosopher Nietzsche said: "What doesn't kill me, makes me stronger." It's a good mantra to help you learn from the outcomes of those choices, move on, and leave the detritus of life behind.

Self-awareness is important, that sense of knowing who you are. You cannot help who you are, any more than you can help where you were born. Some things about yourself you won't like. Others you will. Learn to accept the things about yourself that you cannot change. And the rest, improve on.

My first editor called me a "lemon" said my writing skills left a lot to be desired and despaired that had hired a dud. Instead of being offended or wallowing in self-pity I saw it as an incentive to simply prove him wrong.

You will meet plenty of people in your life who will find fault in you and put you down. People love to tell you where you are going wrong. They are quick to criticise and slow to praise.

Thanks these people for their interest and get on with your life. Trying to please everyone, means you please no-one including yourself.

As you make your way through life, there will be plenty of interesting challenges. Accept them all. View them as doors you pass through. Do not let life pass you by.

To help you along the way, here are some useful tips:

- Find a passion and follow it - no matter what how mysterious or weird to others.
- Never, ever assume –it's a terrible trait. Assumptions cause all kinds of mistakes and misunderstandings.
- Understand the power of the word: "Why". There is nothing wrong with not knowing something and always be willing to admit you do not know everything or you are wrong. Be willing to change your mind when faced with convincing evidence.
- Don't be a whinger. If you have a problem with something, offer a solution and then be prepared to help fix it. If you are not willing to be part of the solution, you are not entitled to complain.
- Never use a long word where a shorter one will do.
- Never stand silently by in the face of intolerance and cowardly bullying. There is nothing funny about being shunned and made to feel unwelcome because of who you are.
- Wear sunscreen on your face every single day, this is for guys as well as the girls. Trust me, in 10 years time when look barely a few years older than you do now, you'll thank me.
- Don't put stuff on the internet about yourself that will come back to haunt you. Apply this rule – if you wouldn't want it to appear on page 3 of next week's Sunday Mail - then it's not right for the net either. The internet is not private.
- Be angry about injustice. In the end, if you know what you are doing is not making the world better, then don't do it..

- Giving is better than taking. While sharing is even more preferable to giving.
- Demand your right to know. Information breeds confidence. Silence breeds fear. Sunshine is the best disinfectant.
- If by chance some of you find yourself on a path towards working in government, or even entering politics – of any kind – I implore you to consider your constituents. Australian governments of all kinds have forgotten that leadership is best achieved when it is clearly communicated. In 20 years of covering community affairs in Adelaide, I have rarely seen genuine and effective community consultation. Too often community participation is factored in too late to make a difference. Govts have already made up their minds are then just go through the motions. A Chinese goes: “Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; involve me, I understand.”
- If you are applying for a job – find out who you should be applying to – and spell their name correctly. Never send a generic letter or job application addressed to “to whom it may concern”.

The great US documentary film-maker Ken Burns says “your future lies behind you”. And it’s a sentiment I share. In the past 23 years of journalism, I have learned many things, but the most important lesson is Burns’ view that the past is our greatest teacher.

Find your inspiration – whether they be people or events that provide help, comfort, wisdom and leadership. Mine come from three women who continue to inspire me today.

The first, my mother Judith. A generous and creative woman whose own career and life ambitions were neutered by a lack of opportunities in 1950s Australia for women of her generation. She has encouraged and supported her daughters to pursue their lives, interests and career goals without prejudice and respected their choices, however unorthodox.

The second was my high school history teacher Maryanne Magill – who gave me a love of history and taught me to appreciate the rights of the individual

and a respect for an open and democratic society; her constant refrain was leadership by the strong and care for the less fortunate.

The third is Catherine Helen Spence. She arrived in SA, in 1839, as a 13-year-old, became a teacher in her teenage years and she started writing for newspapers at just 16. She turned down two marriage proposals and continued writing – including the first novel published by an Australian woman. Spence took on a public reform role that particularly targeted the care of children; she introduced a foster care system in SA, helped establish kindergartens and the first government school for girls in Australia, and later battled for fair wages for female textile workers. As vice-president of the Women's Suffrage League, she helped win the vote for women in SA, the first place anywhere to give them the right to stand for office and she became the first woman elected to a political position – as a representative to the 1897 convention that drafted the Australian constitution.

Her speech at celebrations to mark her 80th birthday, in 1905, contained words that continue to inspire me today:

“I am a new woman and I know it. I mean an awakened woman ... awakened to a sense of capability and responsibility, not merely to the family and household but to the state; to be wise, not for her own selfish interests but that the world may be glad she had been born.”

Thank you for your time – and I wish you all great enjoyment in your life.