

from it and keep going.”

She urged graduates to never stop learning as a photo of her 74-year-old father taking his first flying lesson was shown on the arena’s digital screen. “Now, consider he’s also still trying to learn how to work his iPhone,” she said as the audience laughed. Gibson also noted the importance of connecting with people in a world of technology.

“Social media is no replacement for true connection. I’ve got a number of my connections that are here in the audience today,” she said. “They’ve completely helped me get where I am. It’s really hard to succeed flying solo – it takes a team. ... Make it a mission to truly connect with others from all areas of your life and not just on social media.”

Gibson emphasized the importance of being kind and helping others, making work-life balance a long-term goal and that the best years are ahead for those graduating.

“I know a lot of people say that college are the best four or five years of your life, but I promise you that your best days are ahead of you,” she said. “Your futures are bright, and you will do amazing things.”

She reminded graduates that the degrees they were receiving prepared them to go anywhere to pursue their dreams, and the time to venture out into the world is now rather than later. Gibson closed by urging the graduates to change the world and not be “limited to doing whatever it is your college degree says you ought to be doing.”

“Gracious, I’ve got two degrees in agri-business, and I am not selling farm chemicals these days,” she said. “If you want to go in a different direction, ‘go.’ Jump at opportunities to change your city, your state, your nation and your world. If you see something that needs to be changed, do it. You are your generation’s best hope.”



Chad Danter (r) receives congratulations for completing his degree from UT Martin Chancellor Keith Carver on May 5 during spring commencement in the Kathleen and Tom Elam Center.

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