



# GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

**Alice Bosies Velez '84, '93**  
**President of the Alumni Board of Directors**  
**GCU Commencement Remarks**  
**October 17–18, 2020**

My name is Alice Velez, Georgian Court Class of '84 and '93. As president of the GCU Alumni Association, it is my privilege to speak to you, the Class of 2020. To have the opportunity to participate in Commencement and address the graduating class is not something I imagined when I graduated. The first time I gave this address, it was in front of a very small camera crew in the Casino Ballroom. This is so much better!

We are still living in a world that none of us could have imagined in March 2020. No other graduating class ever, from any college or university, graduate or undergraduate, have had to adapt to changes and overcome challenges practically overnight, as you have. I hope that you are celebrating your success and focusing on all that you have accomplished.

Although you couldn't be with your classmates, teachers, friends, and family in May, and many of them still might not be with you today, you all will forever be a member of the Class of 2020. You will stand out among all of our alumni as pioneers of adaptability, resilience, and strength. I encourage you to draw on these experiences when facing the challenges of what comes next. Use this experience to think creatively when problem solving. Don't accept limitations. You and your classmates will not only

think outside the box, you will question whether boxes need to exist at all, and if they do, what they should look like for future generations.

Commencement is often described as an event commemorating the transition of life from one stage to the next. If we use this definition, you had two Commencements last spring. Your life certainly transitioned when GCU was required to transform their instructional platform to remote learning. The lessons you have learned, not only during your years in school, but especially since March, will guide your actions, both personally and professionally.

In May, you transitioned into postgraduate life. After I graduated, I looked at summer as my reward for four years of hard work preparing for a career in education. I hope that you were able to reward yourselves for all of your hard work as well, even if it required a lot of pivoting.

Pivoting is my new favorite word of 2020. I once looked up “how to pivot effectively.” This is my takeaway:

1. Pivot as soon as you can but be thoughtful in the new direction; otherwise, you'll be pivoting again sooner than you had hoped.
2. Don't pivot so far that you lose your way; pick a new path that still aligns with your vision.
3. Pivoting doesn't mean starting all over; redirect your resources towards your new goal.

All graduates from Georgian Court share a common set of tools that have prepared them for life after school. And all graduates are forever members of the GCU family. Like family, whether by birth or by choice, GCU will always be there for you. And we hope that you will be there for future Lions.

At the start of your first year, during Convocation, the Alumni Association unveiled your class flag and welcomed you to The Court. At Commencement, it is your time to give it

back. The Class of 2020 flag will proudly be displayed at major university functions, beginning with the May 2021 Commencement Ceremony.

On behalf of all the alumni of Georgian Court, I congratulate you and welcome you to the Georgian Court Alumni Association. We are so very proud to call you fellow alumni.