

## Janet Lucas Whitman '59

### Remarks

Skidmore College 101<sup>st</sup> Commencement

May 19, 2012

President Glotzbach, members of the Skidmore community, distinguished guests, and members of the Class of 2012 and their families—on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I welcome you to the 101st Commencement Exercises of Skidmore College. Think of it—100 of these Skidmore ceremonies have taken place prior to today, and though in earlier years these occasions may have been more modest in scale and held at more humble venues, they indeed had the same core mission—to send our graduates out there, *well equipped*, to forge a path and make a difference.

I also want to welcome members of the local community to this ceremony. With the help of this wonderful SPAC facility—with its new spiffy exterior and ample seating for all—Skidmore Commencements are open to the public, and this is symbolic of the College's openness to the community on so many fronts.

And what has brought us all here today? On this occasion we celebrate the achievements of our seniors and officially send them into the wide world. There is some rough terrain out there and the challenges are daunting, but we are counting on these graduates to move ahead and help us make positive change. That's where critical thinking, determination, and creativity—attributes that lie at the heart of a Skidmore education—come into play. At Skidmore, we call it “creative thought at work,” and the world needs plenty of it.

The drive to make a difference in the world doesn't suddenly arise at the time of graduation; it is something that is cultivated, encouraged, and enabled at Skidmore during all four years of the student experience. There are examples by the hundreds from this past academic year, like the pre-med students who used their spring break to travel to Peru to assist in mobile health-care clinics, and another group that went to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to help families after the devastating tornadoes.

Graduates, you have your work cut out for you! We need energetic problem solvers educated to think critically and act decisively. And, that's where you come in, Class of 2012.

We hope that the College will hold special importance for you and that you will always remember your Skidmore roots.

Skidmore has helped to establish your trajectory, and we have high hopes for the launch, which takes place this very day. Bon voyage and congratulations!