

# Commenc

**T**hreatening rain didn't dampen spirits as five hundred ten undergraduates and 35 graduate students crossed the stage to accept their diplomas during Williams College's 219th Commencement on June 1.

Among the Class of 2008, 10 students graduated summa cum laude, 68 magna cum laude, 102 cum laude, 40 with highest departmental honors and 87 with departmental honors. There were 66 members of Phi Beta Kappa and 45 members of Sigma Xi. Honorary degrees were awarded to world-renowned sculptor Richard Serra, who gave the Commencement Address; business leader Robert I. Lipp '60, who gave the Baccalaureate Address; Exeter College Rector Frances Cairncross; women's health advocate Nawal Nour; and former Secretary of State George Schultz.

For the complete texts of speeches and citations, along with an archive of commencements past, visit [www.williams.edu/home/commencement/2008](http://www.williams.edu/home/commencement/2008).

Though standing a diminutive 4 foot 6, my grandma has more experience than anyone I have ever met, as she is 100 years old and counting. The last time I saw her, I sat down by her bed and earnestly asked her, "Grandma, what do you think a graduating college student should know about the world?" She gazed for a while into my eyes and replied, slowly, "You're beautiful." ... As I sat there trying to make some sense from her confused reply, I realized that Grandma's statement contains wonderful advice for life. ... Find the beauty in everything and everyone as best you can. It'll make you happier, focusing on the positives in your everyday lives. Be liberal with your compliments, as it is a great way to make friends out of strangers.

—Class Speaker Gordon Phillips '08 in his address  
"Good Morning"

# ement 2008

Photography by Nicholas Whitman



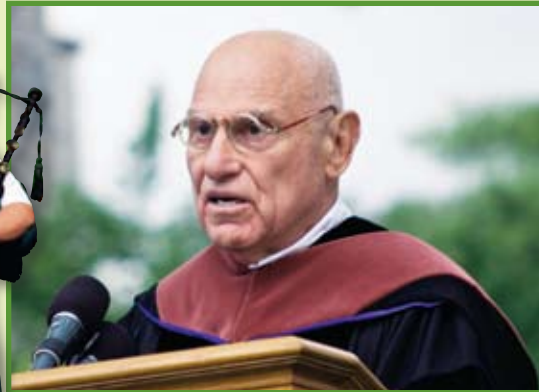
The real lesson is that the things that made you happy at Williams are exactly the things that you should continue for the rest of your life. I know it's hard to believe, but life can really be a continuation of Williams. ... Keep learning. Keep searching out interesting people. Keep a broad perspective on your career choices—if you can follow a "passion," this is the time to go for it!

—Robert I. Lipp '60 in his Baccalaureate Address  
"Don't Make a Living, Make a Life!"



The purely practical value of the liberal arts is only a small part of their worth. Once you've put enough space between yourself and the finals, the papers, the deadlines and the stress that came with all of your classes here, take a moment to look back. ... No, we will no longer have the amazing and talented faculty of Williams at our disposal, but the spirit of Mark Hopkins and his log is portable (though good luck fitting the log in your car).

—Valedictorian Zachary Thomas in his address  
*"The Liberal Arts After Williams"*



You are going to have to rely on yourself to manage the world, to make the world intelligible and in so doing not allow yourself to be victimized. Identity need not be found in rejection. ... Don't suffer fools gladly. ... You must begin to forget all the voices that are buzzing around in your head, and you may find it necessary to say no to the demands of the many who claim that they have only your best interest at heart, because ultimately you cannot become the person they want you to be. ... Fear is poison. Resist it. ... This is not the time to play it safe, it's the time to take risks, the more the better: If not now, when?"

—Richard Serra in his Commencement Address "If Not Now, When?"

Let me just tell you about a statement that was a great relief to me. It's buried in pages and pages of contract, regulation and equipment specifications for the position I'm taking next year. I am going to follow capuchin monkeys around the forest in Costa Rica. The sentences read as follows: "The project also has machetes to give out. These you keep over the year as well." Let's just pause and think about what this really means. To me, it meant this: If you want to cut your own way, you can find people who will, quite literally, give you a large jungle knife to do so. ... It suggests we can have confidence that others will be supportive of our wandering into new territory. Supportive and excited enough to help equip us with the crazy tools required to go."

—Phi Beta Kappa Speaker Erika Williams '08 in her address  
*"Get a Machete"*

