

# Graduation Remarks

When I spoke at last year's graduation celebration I wondered how significant the pandemic would seem to your generation when you looked back on it in the context of your lives more generally. Would you feel it was important enough to discuss with your children and grandchildren? I ask because I remember that no one I knew who had lived through the pandemic of 1918 ever mentioned it to me.

I am now convinced this one will be quite different and its memory will be passed on to future generations. First, the pandemic has lasted much longer than most of us naively anticipated a year ago. And, second, the pandemic has become associated in our minds with an increased awareness of the inequities that are the focus of the education policy field—both the inequities in the United States and the inequities internationally, increasingly visible now as so many countries struggle to vaccinate even a very small proportion of their populations.

I know from working with you that it is your dedication to

addressing these inequities that brought you into the policy field. My congratulations to each of you on your graduation—and for taking on the most difficult, and important, of problems. John Donne described our shared responsibility better than I ever could in his 1624 poem:

"No man is an island,  
Entire of itself.  
Each is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.  
... For I am involved in mankind."

Thank you.