

Class of 2023 Graduation

19th July 2023

Graduate Speaker Dr Anthonia Adefolaju

Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, friends, family and fellow graduates! I am humbled and proud to speak on behalf of this graduating class today.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry's cohorts for reaching this momentous milestone - we did it! For my fellow MBChB graduates and I, from today, the coveted title of Doctor is finally ours. Isn't that amazing (and a little bit terrifying)?

I still remember how I felt on my first day in Liverpool - grateful to be granted a place to study the course of my dreams, nervous about how I would find the content, but most of all excited to see where the journey would take me. Although I knew (or at least hoped!) that I would leave Liverpool a physician, I never anticipated that I would be leaving as a part of such a caring and formidable cohort.

I'm sure we can all remember how overwhelming those early days were - Getting to grips with a new city, new people, and new knowledge gained in a dauntingly large lecture theatre (fun fact, I actually went to the wrong lecture my first day of university!)

Eventually, we became all too familiar with those early morning lectures, you know, the ones where you were just about awake enough to have your eyes open, but not quite awake enough to fully understand the Krebs cycle? Those ones!

And then before we knew it, we were on our clinical placements and were off on a whistle-stop tour of the best hospitals in the North West.

Reflecting back on this journey, it is through hard work and dedication (and an assortment of coffee and cans of Red Bull), that we've arrived at this finish line.

Thanks to the incredible range of trusts and specialist units available to us in the region, we've gained extensive knowledge about the innerworkings of the body which we'll now be able to use to provide the best care for our patients.

Liverpool has been the perfect place to grow into the people we are today. For me, it's given me the chance to discover a true passion of mine - talking endlessly!

I've had the pleasure of representing my colleagues as course rep, founding the BME Medics Liverpool Society with fellow student doctors and having the opportunity to work with the Anthony Walker Foundation to increase awareness of discrimination in the NHS.

I'm not the only one who's been able to thrive at Liverpool. As if working towards a medical degree wasn't enough, our amazing cohort have put on world-class performances, conducted and presented research on both the national and international stage and raised incredible amounts of money for different charities. We've taken home numerous sporting titles, including

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the coveted title of Winners of the Medics/Dentists/Vet sports day. Sorry to the dentists in the room!

Time and time again, we've shown that our dedication extends way past the confines of the wards, and that is something we should all be proud of.

Whilst these big wins are wonderful to look back on, the everyday achievements should not be ignored. We've supported ourselves and each other through some often gruelling, but ultimately rewarding, experiences. Through the highs like finally passing our exams, to the lows of pulling all nighters in the Harold Cohen. Our time at Liverpool has built our resilience and tenacity and has allowed us to form invaluable friendships and connections which I know we all cherish. And of course, we have navigated this in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and have come out stronger for it.

And now for the thank yous. I'd like to thank God, as through Him all things are possible! I want to take this time to thank family, friends, loved ones and mentors that have helped us towards the finish line. Whether it was through becoming unwilling 'patients' as we practised for clinical assessments, being a captive audience to our presentation rehearsals, or just simply lending an ear when we needed it, we all thank you. Without your support we wouldn't be standing here now.

I owe a massive thank you to my family. I know I wouldn't be here without the sound support and advice of my parents and the wise beyond their years little sisters! Your love has kept me going at even the most difficult of times, and I hope you all know how much I love and appreciate you. And to all my friends and loved ones from before university as well as those I picked up along the way, I say again, thank you and I love you all.

Also, shout out to my car (Mary J Blige//MJB) for getting to and from placement! There were times it got dicey, especially on the M6 on the way to Blackpool(!) but MJB pulled through and will be coming with me to my F1 job!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Professor Scott and all the staff and tutors at the School of Medicine, as well as all of the NHS Trust partners. We have been fortunate enough to benefit from first class teaching and mentorship throughout our years, and have become all the more well rounded and caring and for your guidance, ready to face the realities of working life in healthcare settings.

Liverpool as a city is so full of culture and diversity and has been the most wonderful place for us to embark on our educational journeys. From being home to two sensational football teams, having what must be the best range of restaurants and shops in a walkable distance, to hosting the best song contest to grace our screens (Eurovision), there is truly never a dull moment in this city. We've all been so privileged to call Liverpool home, and I know Liverpool will always have a special place in my heart.

To avoid me talking everyone's ears off (which I would 100% do if given the chance) I'll finish by quoting a line from the international icon Beyonce from her new album Renaissance. "Unique!



That's what you are'. And indeed, that is what we all are. Each of us has that spark that makes us all so special.

As we leave Liverpool and head our separate ways, I want all of us to remember what makes us unique and bring that to everything we do. My hope is that we can all take forward not only the knowledge, but also the creativity, compassion and enthusiasm Liverpool has allowed us to foster.

Class of 2023, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours; I have no doubt we will all go on to achieve amazing things. Thank you all for allowing me to have one more captive audience here at Liverpool!