

First I would like to congratulate family members and spouses. A West Texas saying goes “When you see a turtle on a fence post- it didn’t get there by itself. Family and spouses are a part of why students are here today.

To the Class of 2013 – Congratulations for being selected as a member the Texas Tech School of Medicine. You were chosen from some 3000 applicants. As a group you have a 3.7 GPA. The class includes 72 men and 68 women. We have 23 students from UT Austin – most ever. (Maybe because of last year’s football game), 36 from TTU, 10 from Baylor and 10 from Texas A&M. (I know it sounds like more than that) Students come from Cornell, University of Rochester, and Bowdoin, Maine to the North, UCLA and Pepperdine to the West, George Washington to the East and UTEP to the south

You are soon to step forward to wear your white coat for the first time. Please enjoy the moment and reflect on the sacrifices you and your family have made to be here.

*Your white coat today means that you have been invited into a prestigious profession-one where you will be a trusted participant in the most profound elements of human life –birth, renewal, cure, survival, rehabilitation, but also decline, insanity, pain, sorrow and death. (such as the death of a resident and former student in our ER this week) Very few are permitted to take this journey that you are beginning. You have been granted communion with life’s most important trials and mysteries. Artists, poets, and priests may see what you see- but they lack the scientific tools that you will begin receiving – gifts to change people’s lives – to cure disease and alleviate suffering. You will learn to appreciate mans vulnerabilities but also his nobility and transcendent spirit.*

*You will have endless options to choose from – go to the CDC to study influenza, to a small town in West Texas or to Hollywood to do plastic surgery. You alone will make the choice. Wherever you go, you will be highly respected and paid well. But you will also have great responsibility, the responsibility that comes with a noble profession - those responsibilities which you accept today in your own oath. To hold sacred the physician patient relationship protecting privacy and autonomy, to be honest with patients about options and about mistakes and shortcomings, to care for all patients even the most vulnerable and to respect and understand cultural diversity, to commit to lifelong pursuit of excellence in learning and acquiring scientific knowledge, clinical skills and capacity for compassion , to respect colleagues and recognize the need for teamwork in today’s health care system.*

*And if you come to recognize inadequacies in our health care system, I hope you will play your part in trying to correct them.*

*Remember that you did not choose medicine to own a huge home or to become famous or important. You chose medicine because you care about helping people – because*

*you are interested in healing mind, body, and spirit. I welcome you to Texas Tech School Health Science Center and to the Profession of Medicine*

*Now I would like to introduce our students to President John Baldwin. Dr Baldwin graduated from Harvard University where he was tops in his class and elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He was a Rhodes Scholar and later attended Stanford University School of Medicine. He trained in both internal medicine and surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital and served on the faculty at both Stanford and Yale. He has had a distinguished career as cardiovascular surgeon with administrative positions as Chairman of Surgery at Baylor replacing Dr Debakey, Dean of Dartmouth School of Medicine, President of the Harvard Institute for Immunology.*

*In his role as President of the Texas Tech Health Science Center he has more than doubled research funding, raised the bar in all aspects of academic life, and initiated collaborative educational programs to encourage teamwork among the schools of Medicine , Nursing, Pharmacy and Allied Health. Most importantly he was instrumental in securing accreditation for the Health Science Centers second medical school – the Paul Foster School of Medicine in El Paso. Later today he will fly to El Paso to attend their first white coat ceremony. Thank you Dr Baldwin for all you have done for the School of Medicine.*