

Prof. Gelana Amentle's message on  
the 40th Anniversary of Mengistu H.  
Baldwin

I have no words to express my feelings. Thank you for the recognition and for the award.

There are many things in life for which we are thankful. Mentioning all is unthinkable. However, in relation to the occasion for which we are gathered, there are three main things for which we can be grateful.

The first thing is for our extended life. Every year is a gift. Being older is a privilege that should be honored. It is difficult to survive in a nation that has constantly experienced starvation and conflict. There are those who have not made it to this day. It is time to honor the many who haven't had the opportunity to join us today. When we consider what we have endured in terms of both natural and man-made problems, we should not take lightly the miracle of existence. We ought to be appreciative of the gift of another day.

A meaningful and successful life offers a deep sense of fulfillment that surpasses life's basic duration. We should be grateful not just for the long life but also for a meaningful one filled with accomplishments and contributions. All of you have gotten chances to serve your family, your community and your country for the last forty years or so. These are immense contributions for which each one of you deserve lifelong achievement awards. Until such time comes, let me congratulate you since you have made the institution that hosted you, the instructors that have delivered whatever they could in terms of knowledge, and the rest of the community that have contributed to your growth and development, proud. We are proud of all of you for what you have accomplished because in the end, your contributions matter more than the degree you earned. Achievement is a legacy that lasts a person's lifetime. Emphasize the depth and caliber of your experience and contribution and express gratitude for it.

Remember the saying

***"Art lasts forever, but artists die and are forgotten"***.

The third reason to be thankful is for carrying out your duties without violating your code of ethics or compromising your values. The right thing to do is to be obligated to your duties without considering the outcomes of your works.

***Your duty is your right; the fruits of your action are not.***

***As Ralph Waldo Emerson states***

***"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment"***.

The celebrations you are having today commemorates how important the institution was to your success. When I refer to the institution, I mean its social and physical environments as well as its people. Everyone who has contributed to your success from the heads of the institution to janitors have their signatures in your success. By

acknowledging us, you are in a way acknowledging those who have treated you with love and care as though you were their own children. You are honoring and remembering their efforts and their contributions by inviting us on this momentous occasion. It is an homage to both the living and the dead.

There are many forms of institutional memories. You might remember things like sitting by Haramaya Lake and watching the sunset, taking a long walk to Haramaya town, visiting the village town Bate (which by the way, seems to have promised not to change its stature with the passage of time even though its initial charm and appeal have dwindled). You may also remember taking a train ride at the end of the academic year, or the general charm of the campus. Even after all these years, memories have managed to bring you back together. This milestone honors your enduring relationships, your unwavering spirits and your shared institutional memories. It demonstrates a sincere connection that endured the passage of time. After all,

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***"True friends are valuable and timeless like diamonds."***

***As Elisabeth Foly states it***

***"The most beautiful discovery of true friends make that they grow separately without growing apart."***

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Think of this day as a day of gratitude/thanksgiving for everything you have accomplished, no matter how big or small, for your contributions, no matter how minute, and for everything you have. You have accomplished that by putting tremendous efforts, by overcoming enormous challenges and by maintaining the bonds among yourselves. You have manifested that by extending an invitation to us on this particular occasion as representatives of those who have molded your lives in one way or the other.

I have one final gratitude before I wrap up my brief speech. It is rare for an individual to receive recognition during his/her lifetime. Receiving this recognition is something I am grateful for. I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to all those who have worked diligently to ensure the success of this gathering, particularly the organizing committee for their exemplary efforts.

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**Finally, as you recognized us**

**May the superpower bestow you with the highest recognition,**

**May your life be filled with all the good things that you desire, and**

**May your friendship last a lifetime.**

**God bless you all and thank you.**