Members of the WWAMI class of 2018

I would like to congratulate you on your success. You have been chosen to represent the great State of Wyoming-the state where the Cowboy and Steamboat are the emblem of our independence and self reliance. To date, the state of Wyoming has financially invested in your education a great extent, the total funding spent by the legislature on your k-12 education is approximately $191,871.79. If you graduated from the University of Wyoming, the financial investment for your education is $162,043.79. And now that you are in medical school, the Wyoming legislature will spend $200,000 in four years on your medical training. The Wyoming legislature believes in the investment of your future so much that we have spent a total of $553,871 on your education. You are our best and our brightest and each of you are worth every penny. You are the best example of all that is good in our young people today.

Before you finish your studies at the University of Wyoming and move to Seattle, Washington to attend yet another UW, I would like to speak to you about being an ambassador from the Cowboy state. Several years ago, this legislative body passed the Code of the West based upon the book written by Jim Owens. The Wyoming legislature felt so strongly about Cowboy Ethics that we placed it into statute and it became a part of our laws. We ask you to carry these cowboy ethics with you to your new UW.
Live each day with courage. Remember you are from Wyoming and you have experienced horizontal blizzards on the plains of Laramie. You can handle anything the University of Washington throws your way. Seattle is a large metropolitan city and its traffic will challenge your driving skills. You can handle the extremely narrow and the crowded city streets with courage.

Take pride in your work. Remember, you have been selected to the WWAMI program because of your high intelligence and your ability to relate to others. Your bedside manner is just as important as your knowledge of medicine. Work hard to build relationships with your patients and spend time with them. Then, sit your butt down in a chair and study to prepare yourself to provide quality health care for citizens of Wyoming upon your return.

Always finish what you start. You are almost done with your first year of medical school and you have one more year of classroom learning left. Soon you will begin your rotations in medicine called the Wyoming tour and then your fourth year will pass quickly. We expect you to graduate and to return to Wyoming.

Do what has to be done.

Be tough, but be fair.

When you make a promise, keep it. The Wyoming legislature has spent almost $600,000 on your education and
you have signed a contract with us. We want you to return to our great state. We expect it. A promise made, is a promise kept.

Ride for the brand. Remember, you represent the entire state of Wyoming and we are watching your medical training. You have made us all proud, and we want you to prove to the University of Washington that you are an outstanding student. You will need to work and study hard. Remember, the whole state is watching! And don’t forget to wear some brown and gold to class from time to time.

Talk less and say more. Mr. President, my God, Phil, you do run on!

Remember that some things are not for sale. Like your love for Wyoming and your commitment and pledge to return to this state. Or your ability to sing Cowboy Joe and your love for the spring rains in Wyoming and how the rains turn this great state green in the spring. You will come to long for the blue skies and the wide open spaces of your native state, and a brisk hike in the Snowies. And, in time, you will dread the rains of Seattle and you will go crazy when the sun shines over Lake Union.

Know where to draw the line.

And last, I would like to remind you that Robert Fulghum wrote a book called, _All I Really Needed to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten_. Fulghum’s ideas are still true today. When you
move to Seattle in the next few months, I urge you to act like a kindergartner, “When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, HOLD HANDS, AND STICK TOGETHER.” You have made life-long friends with your fellow classmates. Take care of each other and remember in Seattle, your parents and friends in Wyoming are thousands of miles away. So stick together. You are Team Wyoming. Be a team.

Fulghum reminds us to be more like a kindergartner and to: “Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Stryrofoam cup: The roots go down, and the plant goes up, and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Stryrofoam cup—they all die. And so do we.” And all the medical training in the world can’t stop that.

Take care of each other and remember that you are the living, breathing example of all the teachers you have had in this great state. Those teachers cherish your future. You are the pride of this state and all that is good about the next generation of medical leaders, and the Wyoming Senate wishes you the best of success. May God bless you all and the Wyoming Senate wishes you, God Speed. Remember, you can’t get back to Wyoming fast enough and we look forward to your triumphant return.

Members of the Wyoming Senate, please join me in welcoming the WWAMI class of 2018 to the Senate.

All rise and join me in song. Sing Cowboy Joe.