

Valedictory Addresses – MFAcc Class 2019



MFAcc Class 2019 - Nancy Gossling - November 4, 2019:

Good afternoon. Thank you for the introduction Professor Brooks. Welcome fellow graduates, distinguished guests, faculty, family and friends. I am honoured to represent the 2019 Master of Forensic Accounting class this afternoon.

We were promised a rigorous and comprehensive world-class program and indeed it was! Hats off to Professor Brooks, Hans Harding, Debby Keown and Nadine Mcharafie.

- You successfully transitioned the DIFA program and delivered a top-notch Masters program providing guidance, support and encouragement every step of the way.
- You provided high quality instructors and experts in their field, who were pragmatic, engaging and overcame any potential challenges of a distance learning program. They led with professionalism and integrity, recommended timely and relevant resources and shared their expertise.
- Most of all, I thank you for providing a diverse and inclusive learning environment where everyone felt safe to speak up and thrived.
- For me, this program was life-changing. It opened the door and provided the confidence to re-enter the workforce after being home raising my family for almost 18 years.

I have to ask my classmates. Did anyone figure out, **Who's Who in the Gupta Zoo?** What a great assignment. The original Fraud Squad, (Faustin, Usha, Nancy Galanis and myself), we learned to work together, to prioritize, identify and simplify issues, leverage our strengths. Where we didn't have the expertise, we supported and encouraged whoever was brave enough to tread into unknown territory. In this case, it was me. I volunteered for what seemed to be the daunting task of preparing an investigative flow chart. Despite uncertainty and limited technical skills, I muddled my way through but by the end connected the dots and put together a pretty fantastic plan. This approach served us well and continued throughout the program. Midway, we successfully integrated two additional members into the Fraud Squad (Kenny and DK). We partnered on assigned questions when folks felt outside their comfort zone or expertise. It wasn't always easy, some times rocky, but we made it work.

The grand finale was the Integrative Capstone which truly brought the program to life. What a memorable experience. It was great meeting everyone in-person and seeing the

support of the instructors, experts and past students. The food was amazing! And a special thank you to Debby and Derek Rostant for filming the classes that I missed. The Examination-in-Chief and Cross Examination were nerve-racking but definitely a highlight of the program. When I learned that I had passed, it brought tears to my eyes, a sense of accomplishment and deep relief.

During the program, I grew to appreciate my colleagues very much.

Usha – You are steadfast and reliable. Always offering to help and share the workload.

Brian – Also known as the serial student, is a graduate of the Masters of Management and Professional Accounting program at UTM as well. I would have to check the catalogue, but I think they may be running out of Masters programs for him. Unfortunately, Brian couldn't make it to the reception but I wish him all the best.

Ojay – Your infectious energy and participation helped drive the classes forward and stimulate conversation.

DK – It was great to have you in our group. Thank you for always putting your best foot forward.

Rajinda - You may not be the first forensic accountant in the hotel industry but you will be the first with their Masters. It is great to be a trail blazer.

Calvin – It was great knowing that we would see you at the St George campus for our exams. Sorry you never made it for a post-exam drink but I am glad to see you here today.

Rand – You are a consummate professional. Thank you for your insight and calm approach to problem solving. I loved your mock interview with Gary.

Margaret – We can all learn from your sense of humour, balanced and practical approach to learning. You were quick to point out that before the final testing was completed, we had our graduation photos taken.

Terrence – Thank you for sharing relevant and timely articles about IFA practice matters and your insightful commentary during class. Please keep sending them along.

Julie – I enjoyed chatting with you after each exam. I love that you have the courage to live your best life and moved to Amsterdam to pursue your dreams.

Faustin – Thank you for the last minute efforts to strive for higher achievement. I would be remiss if I didn't mention our shared-love of the words "bailiwick" and "wheelhouse".

Erin – I admire your leadership and dedication to your group - helping everyone stay on track with readings, sharing notes and assignments.

As the English mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead said "No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude."

My call to action to all of you is to reach out to our classmates who started with us, but are not graduating today. Their efforts helped us to make it to the end. Let's ask ourselves - "How can we help? What we can do?"

Thank you to all of our colleagues, invigilators, tutors, Capstone experts, evaluators, friends and family who provided the support needed to complete the program. It takes a village. Thank you

to my manager at RBC, Amit Agarwal, who supported me through the program. A special thank you to my husband John and daughters – Tayte, Flynn, Reed and Tilly for your patience and understanding. The past two years have been a journey for us all. From the bottom of my heart, I couldn't have done it without you.

"We need forensic accountants more than ever". Opportunities in the field are broad and deep, only limited by our imagination - traversing the areas of loss quantification, patent infringement, business valuations, financial crime investigations, corruption and procurement fraud, not-for-profit advocacy groups, risk management and compliance, anti-money laundering, whistleblowing, cyber security, digital forensics and data analytics. There is something for all of us. Having an investigative mindset, objectivity and scepticism will serve us well as the world becomes more connected and continues to change at a rapid pace. Good luck as you embark on your exciting new adventures. Forge ahead and hold yourself to the highest standards of professionalism. Lead with integrity, leverage your learning and create opportunities. A piece of final advice from Vic Neufeld – Never stop asking questions.

Please join me in celebrating this group of graduates who have achieved the advanced academic requirements of the MFAcc program.

The best is yet to come.