

Valedictorian Speech
Diploma in Investigative and Forensic Accounting
Danielle Martens, Class of 2015
November 9, 2015

Thank you Professor Brooks. Good evening everyone.

Fellow graduates, faculty, family and friends. It is a true honour and privilege to have the opportunity to welcome you all here on behalf of the DIFA Class of 2015.

When I was in University completing my business degree at Laurier I always thought that it would be interesting to get involved in investigative forensic accounting, as we studied large accounting scandals, such as Enron. However, forensic accounting felt like it was one of those dream accounting jobs, yes they do exist and one that I wouldn't obtain. I thought that I would have to move to Toronto or somewhere far away to be able to accomplish it and so I never looked any further into it. After a few years of completing the same audits over and over again, I decided to try for something else and found that there was a posting for an investigative position at a firm called Davis Martindale in London, Ontario. So I thought, why not, and applied. Sure enough, now 4 years later, I am addressing you all here at the convocation for the DIFA graduating Class of 2015 and as a manager at Davis Martindale Advisory Services. This is a spot that if you had asked me 8 years ago, I would never have thought I would be in.

During our week at the capstone one, our small class of 7, all from different cities, background and stages of life, met to begin this adventure together. I remember sitting together and looking at the graduating class of 2013 going through capstone 2 at the time, and us all being very hesitant of what was to come. However, it is during this week that we all bonded, learned of each other's backgrounds, families, and interest and talked about how we would survive the next 2 years together.

Over the course of the two years we met every Wednesday night to go over the latest topics in forensic accounting and learn about practice issues, litigation and standards that we would need to uphold. We were taught by many great professors that were dedicated to the profession and who all had many interesting stories to tell of their experiences in the field.

Then, after completing our 50 plus page research papers, we got to finally meet again at capstone 2. For some of us this was the first time that we got to see our peers again in 2 years. How can I describe capstone 2? While it was one of the most intimidating weeks many of us have experienced but it was also one of the most fulfilling. It was a great honor and opportunity to have some of the top lawyers, judges and forensic accountants sit with us for several days to walk us through some of the most important aspects of investigative accounting such as interviewing and being an expert witness in court. I have to admit, it was intimidating to begin with, but when a lawyer walks into the room and starts to examine and question you like he would in court, it makes you very intimidated for what is to come. It was truly amazing to see what a lawyer can make you say on the stand, but thanks to what they taught us and the practice we got, we were all ready for our testing, and we did it!

I know many of us would like to thank our family and friends for their continued support, as they were there to help us juggle readings, work, exams, reports and research papers over the past two years. If it were not for our family and friends, many of us would not be here right now. For me, I would especially like to thank my husband and family for all of their support. During our program, I gave birth to my first child, my son Ethan. If it were not for my husband and family, I would not have been able to juggle being a new mom while completing the program.

Today marks an important day where we join others that have their Diplomas in Investigative Forensic Accounting and one that we should all be very proud of. It is truly amazing how close we have all become, especially when some of us have only

met face to face for two weeks. In this forever changing world of forensic accounting, where there is always a new scheme or case, it is an honour to know that we have been well equipped with the education that we have received here and to know that we have fellow forensic accounting colleges that we can now rely on.

Congratulations Class of 2015 and best wishes on your future endeavors.