



**President Nariman Farvardin
147th Commencement Address
Undergraduate and Graduate Ceremonies
May 22, 2019**

Graduates:

This day—May 22nd 2019—is a defining moment, a day of transition that will mark the end of one phase of your life and the beginning of another phase; the celebration of your educational achievement, and the anticipation of your career; the satisfaction that comes at the end of a long and rigorous journey, and the hope and promise of a bright and rewarding future.

Whatever that future holds, whatever the next step in your journey, you can be sure of one thing: you will be living, working, and building a life in an era of unprecedented, exponentially accelerating, and transformational change.

Advances in research laboratories at Stevens and around the globe have made the impossible possible, the previously unimagined imminent. New tools and capabilities will undoubtedly create disruptive changes in work, in our lives, and in our global society. Advances in artificial intelligence, in quantum computing, in biomedicine, and in robotics—to name a just few rapidly developing fields—may create a future that looks more like a page from a science fiction novel or a blockbuster movie than anything previous generations have even imagined. The changes you will see in your life and career will, by far, outpace those of any people that have ever lived before you.

Will you, for example, see a time when commercial space flight advances to the point where humans—or perhaps you—will experience life on another planet?

Will self-driving cars become pervasive or will cars even be needed, replaced, perhaps, by some other technology that allows humans to travel quickly and efficiently?

Will advances in genomic research and drug discovery eradicate disease and extend average life expectancy beyond 100 years? What will this mean for families, for the economy, and for society?

Will new capabilities in artificial intelligence and machine learning, in robotics, and in other areas create entirely new industries? Might they also displace whole sectors of the economy, and how will our national and global economies grapple with such changes?

Will machines be able to think as beautifully as the human brain and what will that mean for the nature of work, for art and entertainment, for human-machine interactions, and for human relationships?

The implications of these technological advances are exciting, unsettling, and profound. They are, to be sure, difficult and complex challenges that require serious attention...attention from thoughtful, ethical, technology-savvy citizens...from people like you.

Your Stevens education has instilled in you an incredible work ethic, an entrepreneurial spirit, an ability to collaborate and cooperate to find consensus and develop solutions. Your education has also provided you with an important advantage that members of the Class of 2019 who are graduating from other institutions across the country do not possess: a deep understanding of the power of technology to transform life and society.

Graduates—this is my message to you:

You can be—you must be—the leaders that our country and our global society need at this moment and in the future.

I urge you to get engaged.

Find difficult problems that need to be solved.

Focus less on your differences and more on those things that unite you.

Work toward the common good.

Be selfless.

Be committed.

And be relentless.

Our nation, our global society, and our future depend on you.

Thank you, in advance, for the mark you will make on our world.

And one last thing...come back and visit your alma mater often.