Madame la Rectrice, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je suis extrêmement honoré de recevoir ce diplôme honorifique de l'Université Laval. Je voudrais remercier Mme Sophie D'Amours, le comité de sélection et le Dr Bruno Piedboeuf pour cet honneur très distingué.

Medical professionals are members of a respected and privileged group. But with great privilege comes great responsibility. Our job is to heal the sick and suffering, with care and compassion. Remember that patients are people like ourselves. They too have families, feelings and emotions, and they need comfort and reassurance. Spend time to get to know your patients, to share their hopes and joys, to understand their fears, and to listen patiently. Build trust for it is the foundation of all relationships. Remember that medicine is not merely about the science of disease. It is really about the ART OF HUMANITY.

**Be humble.** A medical career is a life-long journey of learning. Sir William Osler, the icon of Canadian medicine, appropriately entitled his book about medicine “A Student Life”. If you have not read it, I recommend it. Be inquisitive, question constantly and listen carefully to your patients for they have much to teach you.

**Believe in yourself.** Be bold, be imaginative, be innovative, be persistent, and make your dreams and ideas happen. Do not let anyone tell you it cannot be done! I myself came from humble origins. My parents were illiterate. My father was a poor refugee from China who started life unloading sacks of rice from ships in South East Asia. Our family home was a store room in the back of a shop, with straw mats for furniture. But my parents believed in education, they sent their children to school, and they always paid the school fees first, even when there was not enough to eat. And so here I am today. Work hard, believe in yourself and you will be amazed at what you can accomplish. But beware pride and arrogance. In your professional practice, know your own limits and never be afraid to ask for advice.

**Shoot for the stars.** In 1995, when my colleagues and I started the Canadian Neonatal Network to conduct collaborative research aimed at making Canada the best in the world for neonatal outcomes, many thought we could not succeed. Yet today, Canada is the acknowledged world leader in neonatal quality of care and many countries come to Canada to learn how we do it.

**Do not fear change.** We live in an era of rapid change. One of my most interesting initiatives was Family Integrated Care. Many families told me that when their babies were admitted to the hospital, they felt overwhelmed, afraid and helpless. So we changed the care model in the neonatal intensive care unit and taught parents to provide care for their babies instead of nurses. The result was that babies grew better and had fewer complications, and parents were happier and more satisfied. This is a huge paradigm shift that will have implications on health care far beyond neonatology.

**It’s the patients that matter, not the rewards.** My mentor, Dr. Graham Chance once said to me, “Do not worry about recognition and rewards. Just do what you do and do it well, and people will recognize what you do.” So focus on your patients, be generous, collaborate, and do not envy others.

**It’s the little things that matter.** A first year medical student in London recently posted on her Facebook “I was working in the library this evening. A friendly clinical fellow beside me was about to leave and handed me a packet of biscuits and told me to eat well. She told me to remember what made me choose medicine, and that medicine is all about patients and helping them.” You see, like so many things in life, we remember the small act of kindness, the gesture of generosity, or the words of compassion. IT’S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER.

**Make the world a better place.** I once read a story about an immigrant to Canada. As he was leaving his own country, the immigration officer asked “I see you are emigrating to Canada. Don’t you like it here?” He replied “I can’t complain.” The immigration officer persisted “Don’t you make a good living? Don’t we treat you well here?” He replied “I can’t complain”. The immigration officer asked “So why are you leaving?” He replied “Because there I CAN complain”. But some say that Canadians complain too much. Some of my nurses complain that they work too hard because they have to look after more than 1 baby in the neonatal intensive care unit. So I send them to visit China, because there, each nurse looks after 8-10 babies, and when my nurses come back, they tell me “Dr. Lee, I will never complain again! We don’t know how lucky we are in Canada”. So next time you feel like complaining, ask yourself instead “HOW CAN I MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?” You will be surprised how differently you will look at the world after that.

**Finally treasure your family.** In our busy lives, we sometimes do not give enough time to our families. Time flies, children grow up quickly. Remember to make time for your spouse and your family. At the end of the day, they are your most precious treasures. In closing, I would like to thank my wife, Sian and my family for the support, comfort and joy that they have given me over the years. My work would not have been possible without them.

It has been a privilege and an honor to share this time with you. Laval is one of the oldest universities in North America, with a rich history of achievement and excellence. May you continue in this tradition of excellence. Que Dieu vous bénisse et vous protège.