



Michelle Obama holds the honorary degree she received from Oregon State University in Corvallis on Sunday. The first lady was the commencement speaker at OSU where her brother is the head basketball coach. (AP photo)

Michelle Obama Tells Grads to Follow Passions

First lady speaks at OSU commencement

(AP) — Drawing on memories of her childhood and early career, Michelle Obama told Oregon State University graduates Sunday to live life for themselves, not for anyone else.

The first lady spoke at the invitation of her older brother Craig Robinson, the head men's basketball coach at Oregon State. The siblings grew up in a working class family with high expectations, and both chased successful and lucrative careers — Robinson in finance, Obama in a prominent law firm.

"We still had all the traditional markers of success with a fat paycheck, the fancy office, the impressive lines on our resumes," the first lady told a crowd of about 30,000, including 5,000 graduates. "But the truth is, neither of us was all that fulfilled."

"I was living the dream, but it wasn't my dream," Obama said. "Craig felt the same way, unbeknownst to me."

Eventually, both left their lucrative jobs for other passions. Obama went to work for the Chicago mayor, Robinson to coach basketball.

"Success is only meaningful and enjoyable if it feels like your own," Obama said.

A rich life is defined by more than a pay-

check, Obama said, urging graduates to focus on what they have rather than what they lack.

Obama also advised graduates to keep in close touch with the family and friends who are important to them, saying she never missed a chance to tell her father she loved him before he died from complications of multiple sclerosis. She fought tears as she recalled her mother's assurances that her father was proud to be her dad.

"Liking them on Facebook doesn't count," she said. "Nor does following them on Twitter. What counts is making the time to be there in person."

Obama's stop in Oregon was also a chance for her to catch up with family and meet a new nephew. Aaron Robinson was born four months ago to Robinson and his wife.

Robinson said he was surprised, but pleased, to see excitement on campus after the university announced the commencement speaker.

"It's exciting, as her brother, to be able to hear her doing such a good job for our country," Robinson told reporters before Obama spoke.

Obama was awarded an honorary doctorate in public health for her work as first lady on fighting childhood obesity and improving health. She held up the diploma and mouthed, "Go Beavs," a rallying cry for Oregon State Beavers' athletics.

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