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## **2021 Travelers EDGE Keynote Address – Nicholas Furlow**

(DESCRIPTION)

Travelers EDGE graduate Nicholas Furlow is standing in a local neighborhood to present his keynote address.

(SCRIPT)

Greetings scholars, families, friends. My name is Nicholas Furlow, Class of 2021 Management Information Systems graduate from the University of Connecticut, and keynote speaker for the Travelers EDGE 2021 graduating class.

Now first order of business, I would like us all to congratulate the graduating scholars on this huge accomplishment as this truly has been no easy feat, especially considering the surreal challenges presented throughout the academic year.

From navigating campus life in a hybrid format to not being able to see family and friends over an extended period, this 2021 class has risen to the occasion and met these challenges head-on, truly showing the determination and resolve that it takes to be Travelers EDGE scholars while serving as absolute inspirations for future students.

As we all begin our new journeys and endeavors, I would like for us to all keep the following in mind. Although each of us has encountered and overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles in these last few years, our work is not done.

As this past year in particular has shown, life can take hard turns at times, and we must take detours to continue on our respective paths. However, it is at these times that we must ask ourselves what we can do to make these turns easier for the next class of scholars as well as their peers.

Former President of South Africa and visionary, Nelson Mandela, once said: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Now, personally, I view this quote as being two-fold. In one sense, education received in a formal classroom setting can absolutely be instrumental in effecting change within a society, however, one must not forget the value of personal experience in facing the very elements they would like to change. Each of us has navigated life thus far in our respective journeys and that experience, in itself, holds priceless value. Therefore, I encourage you all, as well as myself, to identify someone who is perhaps facing similar obstacles that you have overcome on your journey and lend them a hand of assistance. Whether it be a student in your former high school or any level of education, leverage that experience and provide that invaluable insight.

That is what it means to be a Travelers EDGE scholar. It means to continuously search for ways to empower oneself while utilizing and applying what has learned for the advancement of others as well.

These past few years have put us on an upward trajectory to further our greatness and success. Each of us has carved out our own path and have made a plethora of connections along the way through our undergraduate career and time within the program.

With this in mind, I urge our cohort, as well as alumni and future graduates to leverage the family value that Travelers EDGE holds and embodies, and never hesitate to reach out to anyone in the network you have created along your path, both within the program and beyond.

In closing, I would like to thank my mother, family, friends, the University of Connecticut, and Travelers for being a constant and present support along my journey.

I'd like to also leave off one last quote from business magnate and Apple co-founder Steve Jobs which is "You cannot connect the dots looking forward, you must connect the dots looking backwards."

So, continue to reflect on your journey and how far you have come to get to where you are today. And in doing so, I encourage you to remain inspired by what drives you now as well as in the past, remain humbled by your learnings and experiences, and remain driven by your desires for success and greatness.

By doing this, I am without a doubt that you all will continue to become an ever-growing version of yourself and continue to effect the change you would like to see in the world. Thank you.