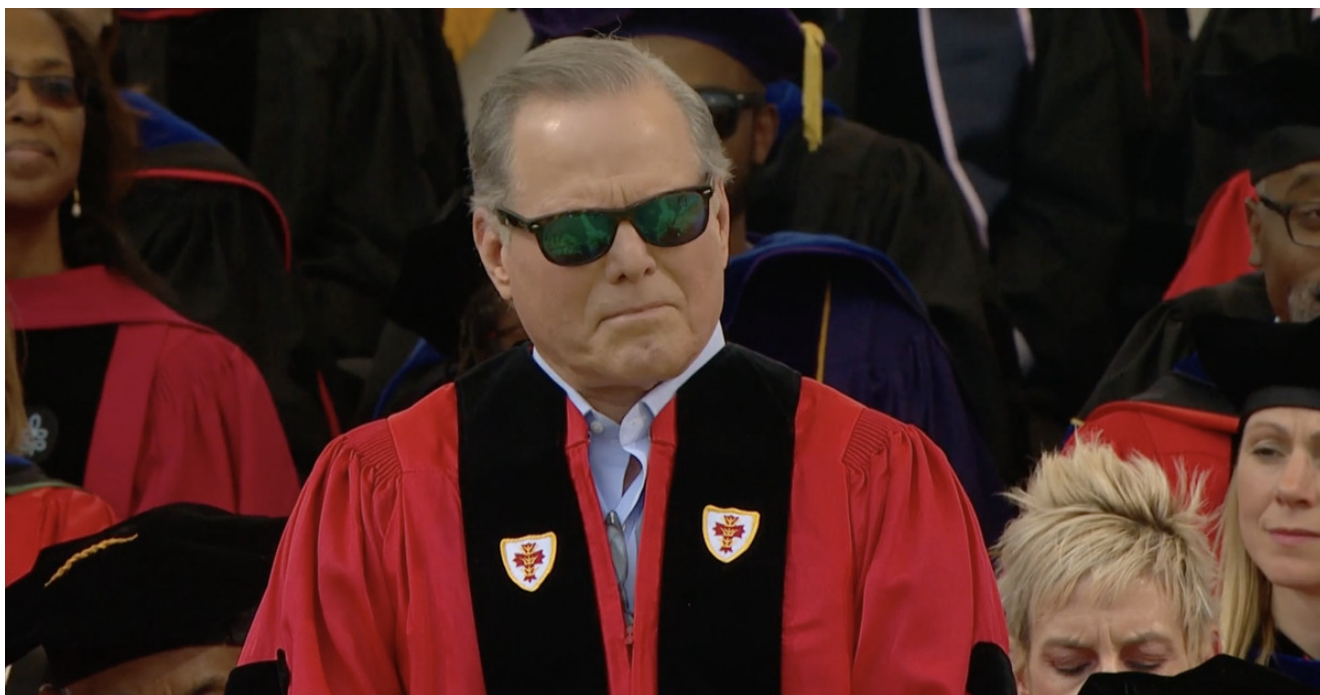


Boston University graduates roasted the hell out of David Zaslav at their commencement ceremony



Almost as soon as a sunglasses-sporting Zaslav launched into an uninspired speech reminiscing about his own time at Boston University as a law student, people throughout the commencement ceremony crowd began booing at the 63-year-old entertainment executive and did not let up until he stopped talking almost 20 minutes later.

“When I was announced as the speaker a few weeks ago, one of my BU buddies sent me a text,” Zaslav said to a wave of jeers. “It said, ‘Who would have thought,’ and he was right. Who would have thought that one day I’d be up here giving you life advice? I have to admit I’m a little nervous.”

Nervous as Zaslav might have been, he attempted to use his time to relate to the class of 2023 by recounting how, after landing a job at a “big, prestigious firm” where he was

“making good money,” he found the work of writing prospectuses not just difficult but so deeply unfulfilling that he had to find a way out. In response to Zaslav’s go at sharing life advice, people throughout the audience told him to shut up and challenged him to “pay [his] writers” – messages echoed by picketers demonstrating outside the event.

“I had to find something that really interested me – something that I really loved,” Zaslav said as someone in the crowd shouted back, “Ruining television.” “But that was really scary. I had a lot of anxiety because I was stuck. I had an apartment, and I had to keep the job until I found something else.”

As it grew increasingly clear that the crowd’s sympathies were with the WGA, Zaslav shifted gears a bit by telling a story about a valuable lesson he learned from his mentor, former General Electric CEO Jack Welch, whose ruthless approach to management turned the company into a legendarily profitable disaster. The key to being successful, Welch told Zaslav, was knowing “how to get along with everyone, and that includes difficult people.”

“In my career, I’ve seen so many talented people lose opportunities or jobs because they couldn’t get along with others,” Zaslav said. “You can’t choose the people that you work with. Figure out what you like about a person. There’s always something, and do what it takes to navigate their challenges. We all have them. The reality is most of us don’t pay enough attention to our weaknesses because it doesn’t feel good to think about our shortcomings, especially when we all believe that we mostly have it going on.”

Disclosure: The Verge’s editorial staff is also unionized with the Writers Guild of America, East.

<https://www.theverge.com/2023/5/22/23732746/david-zaslav-boston-university-commencement-wga-strike>