also “crucial to forging relationships in life.”

The president wished the students well and urged them to think of Columbia not as a physical place to look back upon, but as a state of mind that embodies these principles and the life of the mind. “Columbia is not simply an academy, a place of research and study, but a community, a relationship—one that does not end today. As you leave this campus, keep a little place in your mind, a zone of free inquiry, like the University—call it your ‘Columbia’—where you allow yourself the freedom to think as you have here,” he said.

After his remarks, the president awarded the University Medal for Excellence to Barnard alumna and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, BC’89. Bollinger also conferred honorary degrees to architect Zaha Hadid, political scientist Robert A. Dahl, University Professor Emeritus Henry F. Graff, playwright August Wilson, social activist Dorothy Height, military leader Brent Scowcroft, Princeton President Shirley Tilghman and cognitive scientist Endel Tulving.

Bollinger also awarded the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Teaching to Nicholas J. Dames, associate professor of English and Comparative Literature; Patrick X. Gallagher, professor of mathematics; Lydia Goehr, professor of philosophy; Bruce G. Link, professor of epidemiology and sociomedical sciences (in psychiatry); and Sanford L. Padwe, associate professor of professional practice at the Graduate School of Journalism.

After a musical interlude by the University Orchestra, the president, following tradition, heard the histrionic pleas of the deans to grant upon their respective students their degrees and all of the rights and privileges thereby entailed.