More than just graduation day at FAU

Florida Atlantic University will confer more than 2,600 degrees in three graduation ceremonies. (From left) Graduates Daniel Duarte, from Coral Springs; Andrew Santos from Boynton Beach and Dannah Cohen from Coral Springs. (Martin Alexanian, Sun Sentinel / May 4, 2012)

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Arden Maher, president of student government, did a shout out to Jordan Chang, among others. Chang's fraternity brothers were waiting for him to emerge afterward for a graduation lunch at Rocce's Tacos.

"Thank your parents, especially when you move back in with them," Maher joked in his commencement address. "Half of us may turn on or underemployed. Possibly even scared. But brick walls show us how badly we want something.

"Go against the grain," said Maher, the first college graduate in his family. "Take chances. Don't be afraid to fail." 

Saunders announced an honorary doctorate to the late Marvin Weiner, "a truly remarkable man, a natural scholar and historian... who felt a kinship with Benjamin Franklin," she said.

"The Marvin and Sybil Weiner Spirit of American Collection of Colonial Imprints,” some 13,000 items of Revolutionary War importance, are housed at FAU’s Wilbrey Library, making FAU a major research center in the Southeast,” Saunders said.

Boca Raton resident Dr. Howard Weiner spoke for the family, describing his father as a humble, quiet man with a warm smile and a twinkle in his eye. "The more educated we become, the smarter we realize we are," Weiner told the graduates, wisdom he said he wanted to share.

In an interview later, Weiner said his father was an active graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and parts of the collection were there and at National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. "They assumed they would get the collection. But I suggested because he spent his winters in Boca Raton that he consider giving it to FAU," Weiner said in an interview later. He did that in 2006, and was there for the dedication. "Dad wanted it to be a hands-on experience, where all different walks of life not just scholars would have access to the material," he said.

Trustee Robert Rebin added that FAU has evolved into "a first choice university," and Paul LaRoche urged the new graduates to join the alumni association and stay active ever since.

When they received their degrees, each grad had a cheering section. As they streamed out of the KRP Performing Arts Auditorium afterward for balloons, bouquets and poses, Chang's Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity brothers were waiting to congratulate him on stage. The group is a black, community service organization.

A Jamaican who lives in Miami, Chang said he's taking his GREs for graduate school. John Edouassan, who is Haitian, will become the next chapter president.