

5-22-2015

33rd Annual African American Commencement, 2015

San Jose State University, Associated Students

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Black Grad

STRIVING TODAY TO CREATE A BETTER TOMORROW



FRIDAY, MAY 22ND, 2015 • 5 O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

STUDENT UNION BALLROOM • SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY • SAN JOSE, CA

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today." - Malcolm X



Order of Ceremony

Processional

Chair's Welcome

Invocation

Negro National Anthem

Provost's Address

Student Speaker

Student Performance

Student Speaker

Student performance

Alumni Address

Keynote Address

Presentation of Awards

Greek showcase

Presentation of Graduating Class

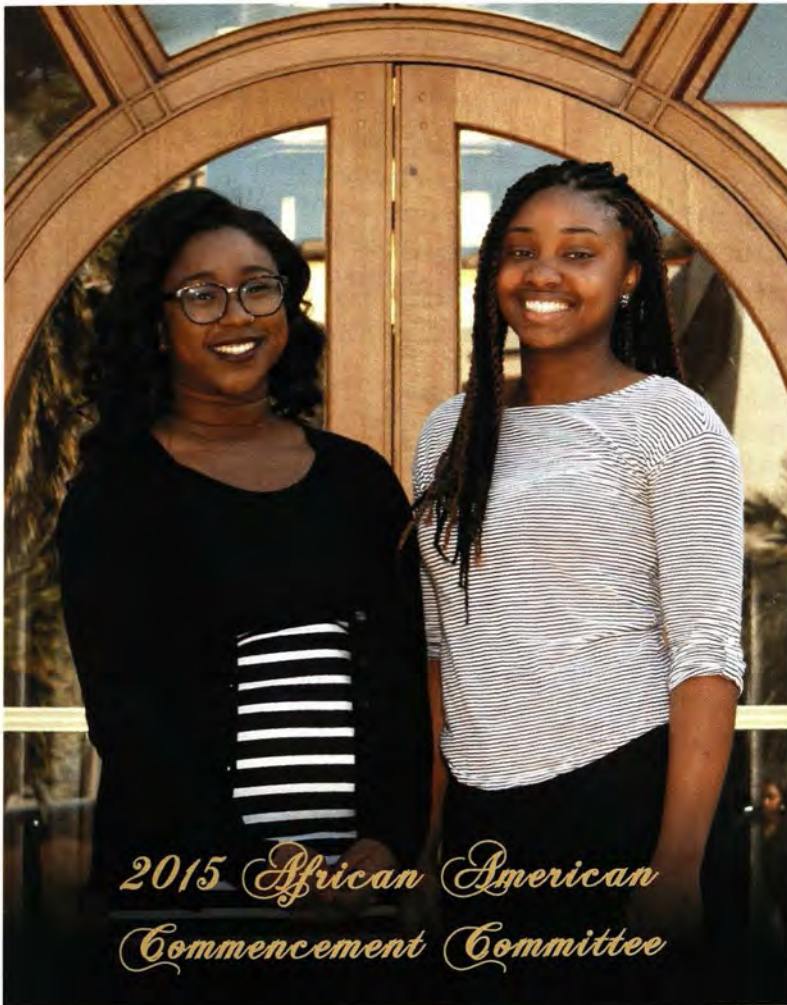
Closing Remarks

Turning of Tassels

Recessional



A MESSAGE FROM THE
African American Commencement Committee



Dear Family, Friends, and Loved ones,

We would like to thank you for all the love and support you have given us throughout the years. Our academic achievement would not be obtainable without you. As we depart from San Jose State University, we would like to acknowledge the impact you have made in our lives.

During the 33rd African American Commencement, we are celebrating the students who have accomplished many goals throughout their educational journey and committed themselves to being important members of the San Jose State University student body.

We would like to show gratitude to our sponsors for their bountiful donations and contributions to the graduates as well as today's ceremony.

Lastly, let us take a moment to acknowledge all those who assisted on the planning committee to make this ceremony a success.

Congrats 2015 Graduates

Continue to strive and preserve for success in your life! WE DID IT!

Sincerely,
2015 African American Commencement Chairs

Executive Board

Rachel Lewis-Chair Desiree Taylor-Co-chair

*Michael Bries-Secretary Ashley Washington-Treasurer Joetta Hall and Krista Geban-Event Directors
Mary Johnson-Program Planning Director Finesse Sineed-Public Relations Lina Mawi-Greek Coordinator*



Mohammad H. Qayoumi
President

Office of the President
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0002

TEL: 408-924-1177
FAX: 408-924-1199
sjsupres@sjsu.edu

May 2015

To the Class of 2015:

Congratulations on your Graduation! I am proud and honored to celebrate your success with you.

The academic achievement you celebrate today, born of hard work and dedication, is the foundation for your future. Your graduation is a milestone: it marks the end of one journey and also the beginning of your life as alumni of San José State University. You have worked tirelessly to earn your degree but still this is only the beginning of our journey.

Each of you has overcome various trials to get here. You've come to learn who you are and rose to meet every challenge. You've grown personally and academically. That is the true Spartan spirit. You know that your dreams can only be realized through diligence.

Education is a life-long process and I wish you well as you continue your intellectual accomplishments and personal growth. San José State is very proud of you. Today, you can be proud to call yourself Spartan alumni.



Mohammad H. Qayoumi, Ph.D.
President
San José State University



Senator Dianne Feinstein
Washington, D. C.

May 22, 2015

African American Commencement Committee
San Jose State University
1 Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192

Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I join your friends and family in congratulating the San Jose State University African American/Black Graduating Class of 2015.

I want to personally recognize each and every one of you for this tremendous achievement. Earning a college degree requires hard work, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence; all qualities that will aid you in your future endeavors. The skills you have demonstrated through your academic career will continue to serve you throughout your life. You should be very proud of your accomplishments and I am confident that your dedication and work ethic will help you reach your goals.

As a United States Senator representing the people of California, I commend you all for your academic efforts and achievements. Congratulations and best wishes for continued excellence and success in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENT
AND PUBLIC WORKS
FOREIGN RELATIONS

United States Senate

HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
SUITE 112
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0505
(202) 224-3553
<http://boxer.senate.gov>

April 27, 2015

Class of 2015
San Jose State University
1 Washington Sq
San Jose, California 95192-0258

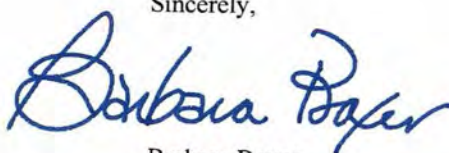
Dear Graduates:

I would like to extend my congratulations to you as you prepare to graduate from San Jose State University.

I am sure your family and friends must be very proud of your accomplishments as you have undoubtedly worked hard to reach this point in your academic and personal life. I am sure that the lessons you have learned will be of great use to you as you pursue your goals.

You have my sincere congratulations on this special occasion. Congratulations!

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

312 NORTH SPRING STREET
SUITE 1748
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
(213) 394-5000

501 T STREET
SUITE 7-600
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
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2500 TULARE STREET
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(559) 497-5109

600 B STREET
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SAN DIEGO, CA 92101
(619) 239-3884

3403 10th STREET
SUITE 704
RIVERSIDE, CA 92501
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Sam T. Liccardo

MAYOR

5/22/2015

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations! Your graduation from San José State University is no small accomplishment. As a former professor in the Political Science department, I know firsthand how challenging obtaining a college education can be. You should be proud of yourselves for all that you've accomplished and especially proud for making San José a better place by getting your degree.

We have no shortage of exceptional San José State University alumni, many of them catalysts for our world renowned Silicon Valley innovation economy. On this occasion, you join them in a growing family of alumni that will continue to propel San José and our region forward.

I thank you for your determination to succeed and commend you for this great achievement. I wish you the very best in your future endeavors reaffirming that San José will always be home.

We Are San José,

Mayor Sam Liccardo

Key Note Speaker

Milan R. Balinton

Although not always wrapped within the shiny gates of triumph, Milan Ray Balinton epitomizes what the road to success often entails. Forcing himself past the hurdle of living with a learning disorder, traversing beyond his start in the impoverished Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, and lifting the barrier presented to him as an African-American young man, Mr. Balinton has conversely shaken the community with his resounding presence and has ventured on to become a highly sought after asset within the African-American community.

During his early years, Mr. Balinton was introduced to the NAACP organization by his grandmother who took him by the hand, urging him to "give back to the community, for many have sacrificed so that we could be free, and you must do the same." These words, which planted a continual reminder, were often what he re-visited and used to overcome the obstacles set before him along his endeavor.

For over 14 years, Mr. Balinton has diligently served his community within various capacities which landed him innumerable leadership and committee representative appointments.

Since graduating from San Jose State University in 2009 with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Communications, Mr. Balinton has continued to devote ample time to service while completing the Executive Master's in Public Administration program at Golden Gate University, in San Francisco, CA. Milan has served in several leadership roles, including, but not limited to: Past Alumni Board of Directors, for the Western Region, Past President of the San Jose Alumni Chapter, current Advisor of the Delta Rho Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., member of the 100 Black Men Silicon Valley Chapter; Past President of the National Pan-Hellenic Council- Santa Clara Valley Chapter, mentor for the Tiger Woods Foundation, member of the Black Leadership Kitchen Cabinet, National Forum Black Public Administrators, member of Maranatha Christian Center, the new SJSU Black Alumni Network, Lions International, CEO of Rise and Shine Consulting LLC and currently the Executive Director of the African American Community Service Agency, to name a few.

Milan R. Balinton is the voice of triumph for those who are often left unheard while facing defeat. People living with disabilities, students, seniors, and the very least of them appreciate the once young boy who made a decision to heed his grandmother's words of wisdom not knowing that years later those same words would be what has single-handedly changed his life as he continues to pay it forward.



2015 Graduates

Christopher E. Atkins



Bachelor of Science Major: Marketing

Organization Affiliation(s):

• Bay Area retail club • marketing association

Plans Post-Graduation:

Attend grad school in pursuance of a MBA

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"You know life is what we make it, and a chance is like a picture, it'd be nice if you just take it."

Dallas S. Baker Jr.

Bachelor of Arts Major: Psychology

Organization Affiliation(s):

African American Success Intern

Plans Post-Graduation:

Plans to attend Grad school in the near future.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Time is a precious thing to have, so make good use of every second that you possess."

2015 Graduates

Haley Larynn Bass

Bachelor of Science Major: Social Science

Melissa Etenesh Bekele

Bachelor of Arts Major: History

Organization Affiliation(s):

Plans Post-Graduation:

My immediate post-graduate plans are to continue on at my current employers, Leiter's Compounding. But, my future goal is to enter into a graduate program for a Master's in Educational Counseling or Administration, with the end goal of becoming an Academic Advisor/Counselor.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Imagination, devotion, perseverance, together with divine grace, will assure your success."

- Emperor Haile Selassie



2015 Graduates

Lula Berhe



Bachelor of Arts Major: CHAD Minor: African American Studies

Organization Affiliation(s):

Served as a Residential Advisor (RA) for Campus Village C
Served as Director of Extracurricular Affairs for SJSU Associated Students
Former Assistant Events Coordinator for SJSU Associated Students

Currently:

Chapter President of Eta Omega Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta
Member of Pre-med club
Stanford Hospital Volunteer
24 Hour Fitness Kids Club Employee

Plans Post-Graduation:

Post-graduation, I plan to attend Medical school and achieve all requirements necessary to become a pediatric doctor. As a pediatrician, I hope to help children all over the world, especially those children living in underprivileged and underdeveloped countries.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"The secret is here in the present. If you pay attention to the present, you can improve upon it. And, if you improve on the present, what comes later will also be better"
- The Alchemist

Gary L. Daniels, Jr.



Bachelor of Arts Major: Political Science Minor: Philosophy

Organization Affiliation(s):

Associated Students President
Alpha Phi Alpha Chapter President & Regional Assistant Vice President
NPHC President
NSBE Vice President
Black Unity Group Cofounder
BSU Member

Plans Post-Graduation:

Masters in Public Administration and Law School

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"We who believe in freedom cannot rest..."

2015 Graduates

Brittany Joyce Ginwright

Bachelor of Arts Major: Philosophy



Plans Post-Graduation:

After graduation I am planning to continue working with the YMCA. I am currently an Assistant Director for an after school program in Santa Clara. I am aiming to become a Site Director of an after school program in my near future. I would love to grow with this company, and travel all over the world before diving into a career.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Construct your determination with Sustained Effort, Controlled Attention, and Concentrated Energy. Opportunities never come to those who wait... they are captured by those who dare to attack."

– Paul J. Meyer

Olajumoke Giwa

Bachelor of Arts

**Major: Art with concentration in Design Studies
Minor: Photography, Art/Visual Culture**



Organization Affiliation(s):

BSU

Plans Post-Graduation:

Graduate school for Graphic design.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary"

-Steve Jobs

2015 Graduates

Ghanai Shalis Estalina Goudeaux

Bachelor of Arts Major: Psychology



Organization Affiliation(s):

I had the honor of pledging Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated in the Fall of 2014.

Plans Post-Graduation:

I have so many plans I don't know where to start. Right after graduation I plan to intern at a Behavioral therapy clinic and work with children with Autism for a year. During this time I plan to complete my masters program application for San Jose State University (Clinical Psychology) and California State East Bay (Clinical Psychology and School Psychology). Once I have my Masters I would love to open up my own Behavioral Therapy Clinic for children with Autism and their families. I would like to have a few clinicians that specialize in different fields such as, Speech therapy, family therapy, Couples Therapy (to help the parents cope), and of course behavioral therapy and behavioral therapy courses for the parents. I want to travel around Europe and maybe even study Psychology at a European University for a while before I start my career.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

Education and work are leavers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work --it must teach life.

-W.E.B. Dubois

Mynesha S. Gray

Bachelor of Arts Major: Hospitality Management



Organization Affiliation(s):

I am a member of Sigma Theta Psi Multicultural Sorority founding chapter. I am also a active member of Chapel of Peace Lutheran Church -Youth Outreach Ministry. I am also a member of the NAACP youth college program.

Plans Post-Graduation:

I plan to work in my field of study, which happens to be Hospitality Management with enhance in Event Management. My goal after gaining a few years of experience, I plan on attending graduate school to further my knowledge of the industry of hospitality. I will then have all the knowledge that is required to open my own small event business.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done."

-Philippians 4:6

2015 Graduates

Corian Griffin



Bachelor of Arts Major: Communication

Organization Affiliation(s):

BSU
African American Commencement

Plans Post-Graduation:

Returning to SJSU for a master's Degree

Quote for the Class of 2015:

After all of these years in college, I've finally done it. Graduation!

Ja'Van Hall



Bachelor of Arts Major: Communications Minor: Advertising

Organization Affiliation(s):

EOP

Plans Post-Graduation:

Give back to my community by inspiring young black males to go to college

Quote for the Class of 2015:

The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.

-Bob Marley

2015 Graduates

Sabrina Hassan



Bachelor of Science Major: Biology Minor: Chemistry & Psychology

Plans Post-Graduation:

My dream is to expand Salam Centre for Cardiac Surgery (FREE high standard surgical care) so that it can become a large enough hospital to provide free surgical care for various departments, hosting all the best doctors from around the world, catering to all the needs of those in Africa and hopefully global.

Realistically, I hope to one day join the UN, as well as Doctors without Borders and be able to make a huge difference in the lives of those in need all over the world.

Big baby steps are key, so for now I plan on obtaining my DPT Degree (Doctorate in Physical Therapy) by 2018 and later specialize in Pediatrics.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

There is no roadmap carved out for your life, be adventurous. Be the best you can be, wherever it may be.

- Anonymous

Familia Fernigan



Bachelor of Science Major: Nutritional Science, Emphasis in Nutrition Education

Organization Affiliation(s):

Peer Advisor on campus
Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated

Plans Post-Graduation:

Possibly pursuing a Master's degree in Health Administration or Public Health

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"You don't always need a plan. Sometimes you just need to breathe, trust, let go and see what happens."

-Mandy Hale

2015 Graduates

Mary L. Johnson



Bachelor of Arts

**Major: Child and Adolescent Development
Minor: Special Education**

Organization Affiliation(s):

President of Sigma Theta Psi Multicultural Sorority at Founding Chapter A.S 55 Awardee
EOP Student
SJSU McNair Scholar
The University of Wisconsin at Madison SERP Scholar
Peer Connections- Peer Mentor

Plans Post-Graduation:

I will be attending the University of Wisconsin at Madison in the Fall of 2015 in the MA/Ph.D Educational Policy Studies Program

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."
- Malcolm X

Jessica Elizabeth Mance



Bachelor of Arts Major: Political Science

Plans Post-Graduation:

I plan to attend law school and become the first lawyer in my family.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

Live your life so that this is not your greatest achievement.

2015 Graduates

Diamond McMillian

Master of Arts Major: Social Work

Organization Affiliation(s):

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

Plans Post-Graduation:

Working as a social worker for Children and Family Services. Obtaining my LCSW license to later practice clinical social work.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Continue to strive for better, and let no one stand in your path!"

Ashlei V. McPherson

Bachelor of Arts Major: Political Science

Organization Affiliation(s):

Associated Students Inc.

Plans Post-Graduation:

I will be attending the University of Iowa for graduate school.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"To succeed, jump as quickly at opportunities as you do at conclusions".



2015 Graduates

Uzo Nwadugbo



Bachelor of Arts Major: Communication Studies

Plans Post-Graduation:

I plan on going to Grad school right away, and possibly further collegiate basketball career.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

To God Be The Glory..Momma WE did it!

Shannon Penn



Bachelor of Science Major: Communications

Organization Affiliation(s):

Proud member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Incorporated

Plans Post-Graduation:

My future aspirations are to attend graduate school. I also plan to network as I begin my practice of motivational speaking. I will some day be a motivational speak that travels the world and encourage people through presentations.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Believe in yourself and others will follow your lead"

-Shannon Penn

2015 Graduates

Willie Lee Radford III

Bachelor of Arts Major: Economic

Organization Affiliation(s):

President Collegiate 100 Black Men San Jose State Chapter
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated
Aspire

Plans Post-Graduation:

To attend Law School

Essence Ruth-Noel Sellers



Bachelor of Arts

**Major: Communication Studies
Minor: Radio, Television, and Film**

Organization Affiliation(s):

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/Black Campus Ministries
Native American Student Organization
The Vagina Monologues
V.I.P.SJ
Frontline Ministry
Dream Ministry

Plans Post-Graduation:

I am an aspiring disk jockey.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you & not to harm you, plans to give you hope and future"

-Jeremiah 29:11

2015 Graduates

Finesse Sneed



Bachelor of Arts Major: Communication Studies

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

-Harriet Tubman

Dai' Monn Stewart

Bachelor of Science Major: Business Management

Organization Affiliation(s):

Member of multi-cultural Fraternity Alpha Tau Omega (ATΩ)

Plans Post-Graduation:

To create a business and make it to Forbes magazine

Quote for the Class of 2015:

You don't work you don't eat.

2015 Graduates

Desiree M. Taylor



Bachelor of Arts

**Major: African American Studies
Minor: Engineering Management**

Organization Affiliation(s):

Black Alliance of Scientists and Engineers
Black Student Union
National Society of Black Engineers
Cesar Chavez Community Action Center

Plans Post-Graduation:

Positively Impact the Community.

Hanna Tesfay



Bachelor of Arts

Major: Psychology

Minor: Business

Organization Affiliation(s):

Sigma Theta Psi Multicultural Sorority
United Fraternity and Sorority Council

Plans Post-Graduation:

My plan is to work in Management Consulting and eventually open my own practice.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"Be the change you wish to see"

2015 Graduates

Deja



Bachelor of Arts

**Major: Child & Adolescent Development
Minor: Psychology & Sociology**

Organization Affiliation(s):

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program
Dean's Scholar
Child & Adolescent Development Club

Plans Post-Graduation:

Continue to graduate school to a pursue a PhD in Educational Policy.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"A Black mind is a terrible thing to waste".

Alia Lynn Tull



Bachelor of Science

**Major: Political Science with an emphasis in Political
Thought and Theory**

Organization Affiliation(s):

Sigma Theta Psi Multicultural Sorority Inc.
Pi Sigma Alpha, National Political Science Honor Society

Plans Post-Graduation:

Currently in a state of wanderlust I have plans to find my calling in this world. I have no definite plan but that's because I have chosen to make the world my playground. With the world at my fingertips there is no knowing where I may go. So for my future, I hope for God's strength and wisdom to light my path.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

You don't have to have it all figured out in order to move forward.

2015 Graduates

Chanae' Ozumonu Wami

Bachelor of Arts Major: Sociology

Organization Affiliation(s):

Fuerza Escolar Mentor (2013-2014)

Black Student Union

Secretary of Replay

Black Grad of SJSU

Plans Post-Graduation:

I have a strong desire to earn a Master's of Arts Degree in Education, Concentration in Counseling and Student Personal. My goal is to provide the best possible service for those seeking guidance from a school counselor. Also I would love to start my own non-profit organization for inner city youth.

Quote for the Class of 2015:

"From the concrete who knew that a flower would grow"

-Drake



Danita Precious Williams

Bachelor of Science Major: Business Management

Plans Post-Graduation:

To own a community center for artistic expression and limitless creativity.

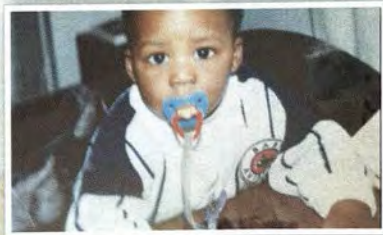
Quote for the Class of 2015:

RUN HARD, PLAY STRONG...IT'S THOSE CRUCIAL MOMENTS WHEN YOU CAN'T TELL WHETHER IT'S RAIN, SWEAT, OR TEARS.



Before they were

GRADUATES



THE NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears have been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God, where we met Thee;
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our GOD,
True to our native land

