

**“Ethics in the Dental Profession”  
White Coat Ceremony  
DDS Class of 2027 / IDS Class of 2027 / DH Class of 2026  
University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry  
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, San Francisco, California  
July 19, 2025**

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Good morning, everyone.

Thank you to our interim Dean Elisa Chavez, for the kind introduction. I’m honored to be here today, and I offer my heartfelt congratulations to each of you as you begin this life-changing journey in the profession of dentistry.

This White Coat Ceremony is more than a ritual—it is a rite of passage. It marks your entrance into a profession founded on trust, service, and integrity. You were chosen for this path not only for your accomplishments, but for your values—your compassion, curiosity, and character.

As a proud graduate of this school from the Class of 1986, we didn’t have a White Coat Ceremony—but we had each other. And many of my classmates became my lifelong friends and we look forward to celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> reunion this next year. On our first day of school, our late, great Dean Emeritus Art Dugoni greeted us with “Today, I invite you to take a moment: look to your right, look to your left—you may be seeing your best friends and chosen family for life.”

As you receive your coat, remember: **what you do every day matters**. As oral health providers, this profession is about consistency, care, and commitment. The white coat is not just a symbol of clinical expertise—it represents your ethical obligation to serve others and your promise to do the right thing, even when it’s difficult.

So, what does it mean to act ethically and professionally?

Ethics is more than a concept. It is the foundation of every decision you’ll make as a healthcare provider. Sometimes, those decisions will be straightforward. Other times, they will test your values, your patience, and your judgment. But always, your responsibility is to your patient—to act in their best interest, to do no harm, and to preserve their trust.

It is interwoven within the culture of the Dugoni School, which is distinctive among dental schools. We don’t just train the hands—we educate the **head** for knowledge and sound judgment., **the heart** for empathy and human connection., **and the hands** for skillful, compassionate care. Let me further say that how we care, how we lead, and how we serve has made us stand out as an admired dental school:

**Many see but we envision. Many hear but we listen. Many touch but we feel.**

Service above self is the essence of our profession. You will be expected to respect patient autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality. You must be truthful, keep your commitments, and honor your patients' values in their care. But your role doesn't end in the operatory. You are joining a profession that exists to uplift others—your community, your peers, and the generations that follow.

Know your limits. Seek growth. Be the colleague and the leader others can trust. Uphold the integrity of our profession every single day.

The oath you take today reflects a solemn promise: to be your patient's advocate, to make their health your priority, and to never violate the trust you are given. This is not a privilege to take lightly—it must be earned every day through your actions.

It is a joy to be part of your journey—and today, I celebrate with you, your family, and your community. Your path as a professional begins now. Welcome to dentistry.

Wear your white coat with humility, purpose, and pride.

Congratulations!