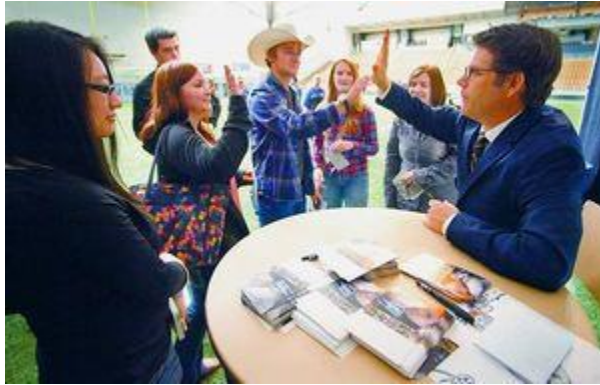


# Former hobbit, football star and goonie speaks at UI convocation

Sean Astin used past roles to challenge students to be brave



Geoff Crimmins/Daily News

Actor Sean Astin, right, talks to students Friday while signing autographs after speaking at the University of Idaho's convocation in the Kibbie Dome in Moscow.



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By Samantha Malott, Daily News staff writer | [0 comments](#)

Sean Astin challenged the University of Idaho's freshmen class to be brave like Samwise Gamgee, adventurous like the Goonies and determined like Rudy during Friday morning's convocation.

As the keynote speaker for the ceremony, Astin was greeted with cheers and a standing ovation as he spoke to this year's incoming class of Vandals, their parents and university staff and faculty.

His humorous speech began as Astin shared his connections to the university through his mother Patty Duke, who regularly works with the UI theatre department and his cousin Will Kennedy, an incoming freshmen at the UI. Astin poked fun at Kennedy. He had him stand up in the audience, making sure President Chuck Staben and the faculty knew exactly who he was.

Moving on to the rest of the student body, Astin referenced some of his past movie roles as inspiration for advice to have the ultimate and most fulfilling college experience.

"Yes you're all vandals and goonies," he laughed as the mention of his role of Mikey Walsh in *The Goonies* brought cheers from the crowd.

In *The Goonies*, the gang was on a mission to find lost treasure, and it was an extraordinary adventure, he explained.

"I would encourage you all to be curious. Be exceedingly curious in your life," he said. "Don't forget to have a sense of adventure in everything you do."

In those adventures he added, it is important to be determined and a fighter like his character, Daniel "Rudy" Ruettiger, was in his journey to play football at the University of Notre Dame.

"He refused to accept the limitations anyone put on him," Astin said. "Choose not to live by other people's expectations of you I demand that you choose to dream."

From his role as Samwise Gamgee in the *Lord of the Rings* series, he reminded students that in being determined and curious, it is still possible to be a loyal and good friend.

Samwise was the epitome of friendship, bravery, loyalty and decency, he said. Everyone has a sense of morality and college is the time to challenge, explore and deepen that with the choices and experiences students go through, he said. He quoted a scene from *The Two Towers*, when Frodo and Sean's character, Sam, were struggling to go on and were feeling overtaken by evil.

"Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back, only they didn't. They kept going. Because they were holding on to something, " Astin said in the voice of Samwise. "That there's some good in this world, Mr. Frodo and it's worth fighting for."

"*Lord of the Rings* is about the nature of good and evil, and right and wrong," he said. "I want for you to choose good."

College is the time, he said when students have the chance to focus on themselves. There is a lot of pressure to be up-to-date on the events happening around the world, he said.

"Your work and life, and your energy are worthy of being invested in," he said. "This is a good time for students to focus on themselves."

The actor spent some time after the ceremony meeting and signing autographs with students and families before heading off to visit his own family in the area.

He thanked the university for giving him the treat to see his own family through this visit. Astin currently lives in Los Angeles and spends time as a touring speaker in between acting, directing and producing projects.

He is hoping to work on some bigger, long-term projects in the future, he said, as well as more comedic roles.

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