

Top Ten Takeaways from Donna MacPhee

The Art of Making Professional Connections

2014 Women's Consortium

- You're all special in a unique way. You're all leaders. You've excelled on the court and field, and in the classroom, and there is no doubt you will excel in the workplace as well.
- Besides an excellent education, Columbia gives you an amazing network that you are an important part of. Alumni love connecting with each other and mentoring students. It is a network each of you should leverage throughout your entire life.
- Feel comfortable, be assertive and confident, yet try not to be too aggressive; humility is a good thing. Be prepared, and remember: it is okay if you don't know what you want to do yet. You're young and should explore your career options. This is the time to figure it out.
- When you do connect with an alum, what should you do? First of all, be yourself, talk about your background and why you came to Columbia. Talk about your successes and challenges on the sports front, share your desire to learn and build your skills. Sometimes it's not what you bring to the table, but what you do at the table.
- Network with your fellow students. They may know people to contact. And when you're alumni, they will be your network...and you will be theirs. You never know where people will wind up.
- I recently read the book *Lean In* by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg. She said, "I feel really grateful to the people who encouraged me and helped me develop. Nobody can succeed on their own." You all are on athletic teams. Build your own professional development team of family members and friends.
- Sheryl Sandberg also said, "The one thing I know now that I wish I had known when I started my career...keep in touch with all connections you have made along the way. You never know when you may have the opportunity to work together again." Keep the Columbia network close to you throughout your years as a student and when you become an alumna.
- You are all extremely capable and strong...be confident, be passionate, so you are remembered.
- You're all going to be successful. But success means different things to different people. If you work hard, put yourself out there to compete in the work place, show respect, act professional and follow through, you will have no worries. It won't always be easy and you may feel awkward at times, but there is no doubt you will succeed in finding something you that will make you happy.
- You can make a difference in both small and large ways, and most importantly be passionate while doing it.