Actor and activist George H. Takei received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters Friday during Commencement.

Actor, activist George H. Takei receives honorary doctorate at Cal State Commencement

The Star Trek actor encourages students to “boldly go where we have never gone before”

George H. Takei, the accomplished actor and champion for the arts and social justice, received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters Friday during Cal State LA’s Commencement. Students gave Mr. Takei two standing ovations during the ceremony.

The 79-year-old Takei, who is best known for playing the character Mr. Sulu on the original, award-winning television series Star Trek, also delivered the keynote address during the undergraduate ceremony for the College of Natural and Social Sciences.

His address was a prism into the trials and tribulations that Americans have endured during the 20th and 21st centuries.

Mr. Takei was a former board member of the Southern California Rapid Transit District and helped establish the Arts in Transit program, which led to each Los Angeles Metro station having its own distinctive artwork. He was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the board of the Japan-United States Friendship Commission and received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, from Japanese Emperor Akihito for his contributions to improving relationships between the two nations.

“We, your generation and mine, have a challenge to boldly go where we have never gone before,” he said, referencing a well-known line from the opening of Star Trek. “Let us learn from the lessons of history, and, as the founding fathers did, shape a new nation to fit the ever advancing, constantly innovating, dynamic challenges of the 21st century. Let us boldly go where we have never gone before.”