

# WWD WEDNESDAY

Sportswear

## Sadove Delivers Keynote Address at LIM

By David Moin

**NEW YORK** — Stephen I. Sadove, chairman and chief executive officer of Saks Inc. and a former head of Clairol, knows a thing or two about branding and its relevance to college graduates seeking jobs.

“Your brand — yourself — will be the most important product you ever try to sell to an organization,” Sadove told the graduating class of LIM The College for the Business of Fashion during his keynote address at commencement exercises Friday at Jazz at Lincoln Center. “Just as at Clairol and Saks, we needed a clear positioning. So do you.”

Sadove didn't say whether it will be easy or hard to find employment this year. Instead, he counseled the 210 graduates on how to do it, and how to achieve success once employed. He advised:

- Being open to learning new things, particularly those out of their comfort zone.
- Using volunteer opportunities or nonpaid internships to hone skills and make connections.
- Looking for career opportunities outside the norm or what was initially planned.
- When taking a position, take on as many challenges as possible.
- Don't assume the highest starting salary is necessarily the best job. “The earning will come as the learning becomes the fabric of your life.”
- Giving back by supporting charities and causes. “It's something we need to do in all stages of our work life.”
- Building relationships and alliances; finding a mentor.

“Focus on your own positioning statement,” Sadove said. “Have you created one about yourself?”

“Many of you are going to be out looking for jobs. What makes you different? Why would you add value? Someone will probably ask them of yourself. It will help you focus on where you want to be and what you really want to do. It may sound



PHOTO BY JOHN ACQUINO

**Jonathan L. Bing, valedictorian Jessica Morganstern, LIM president Elizabeth S. Marcuse and Stephen I. Sadove.**

strange to think of yourself as a product or a brand, but sometimes being objective can help you decide who you are, where you can fit and what you can hope to accomplish. And in developing that positioning for yourself, make sure you stay true to your own core values — what makes you tick.”

Before joining a company, “inquire about the leadership,” Sadove said. “Is there a clear strategic positioning? How are people treated? What's the culture like? Do people enjoy what they do? Are they being developed, challenged and appreciated?”

During the ceremony, Sadove received LIM's Distinguished Achievement Award and an honorary Doctor of Commercial Science Degree. Assemblyman Jonathan L. Bing of the 73rd Assembly District was presented an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree for his support of LIM, which has grown from 340 students in 2001 to about 1,300.