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# UA3/9/5 Commencement Speech

WKU President's Office

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1

**COMMENCEMENT REMARKS - GARY A. RANDELL**

**BOWLING GREEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

**MAY 4, 2007**

IT IS AN HONOR TO BE WITH YOU. IT IS AN HONOR TO SHARE THIS COMMENCEMENT WITH YOU. WE ALL ARE DRIVING THE ECONOMY OF OUR REGION AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL WITHIN OUR REACH, AND WE ARE ALL VERY FORTUNATE TO CALL BOWLING GREEN HOME.

TODAY IS A VERY SPECIAL DAY IN THE LIVES OF ALL WHO ARE ASSEMBLED FOR THIS OCCASION. SOME YEARS AGO, YOU MADE A DECISION TO PURSUE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION—WHETHER OR NOT YOU KNEW IT AT THE TIME, YOU MADE A LIFELONG DECISION.

ALL OF YOU ENTERED THIS INSTITUTION WITH GREAT EXPECTATIONS OF THE FACULTY AND STAFF AT BOWLING GREEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND OF YOURSELF. YOU ARE GRADUATING TODAY, BUT THIS IS NOT AN ENDING...THINK FOR A MINUTE ABOUT THE DEFINITION OF THAT GREAT WORD...COMMENCEMENT. IT DOES NOT MEAN THE END OF SCHOOL, IT MEANS THE BEGINNING...COMMENCING A NEW LIFE BASED ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED. IT MEANS THE BEGINNING OF LEARNING AND, HOPEFULLY, AN ACQUIRED THIRST AND TASTE FOR KNOWLEDGE, A CAPACITY TO EXPLORE, TO QUESTION, AND TO PERCEIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FIELDS OF

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE. AS ROBERT KENNEDY ONCE SAID, "THE FUTURE MAY LIE BEYOND OUR VISION, BUT IT IS NOT ENTIRELY BEYOND OUR CONTROL."

WITH THAT IN MIND, I WANT TO CALL ON THE DEEP-SEATED MEMORIES OF YOUR YOUTH. RECALL WITH ME AN AGE-OLD PARABLE.

"THE ITSY BITSY SPIDER CLIMBED UP THE GARDEN SPOUT. DOWN CAME THE RAIN AND WASHED THE SPIDER OUT. OUT CAME THE SUN, AND DRIED UP ALL THE RAIN, AND THE ITSY BITSY SPIDER CLIMBED UP THE SPOUT AGAIN."

IN THAT PARABLE IS MUCH OF WHAT YOU WILL EVER NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEING SUCCESSFUL. FIRST, DON'T BE AFRAID TO ATTEMPT THE UNFAMILIAR—THE SPIDER CLIMBED UP THE GARDEN SPOUT. HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT? LONG, DARK, UNFAMILIAR, AND UNCERTAIN. ONLY THE HOPE THAT THERE IS A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL AND JUST ABOUT THE TIME YOU HAVE MADE IT, DOWN COMES THE RAIN AND WASHES YOU OUT. LIFE IS TOUGH LIKE THAT. AS HARD AS YOU WORK SOMETIMES, DISASTER HAPPENS, BAD LUCK, AND DIFFICULTY DID THE SPIDER GIVE UP, FORGET ABOUT HIS GOAL? OF COURSE NOT. THE SUN CAME OUT AND DRIED UP ALL THE RAIN, AND DARN IF THAT LITTLE SPIDER DIDN'T CLIMB UP THE SPOUT AGAIN. DETERMINATION, A POSITIVE ATTITUDE, HARD WORK, VISION, AND STAYING FOCUSED ON THE GOAL—IF YOU DO THAT ENOUGH, THE SUN IS GOING TO SHINE AND THINGS WILL GO YOUR WAY. AND, IT IS NOT LUCK. IT IS PREPARATION, AND IT IS PERSERVERANCE, IT IS ALL ABOUT KNOWLEDGE. IT IS WHY

YOU ARE HERE TONIGHT. IT IS THE ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE THAT YOU CAN AND WILL SUCCEED, AND IF YOU PURSUE SOMETHING LONG ENOUGH WITH ENOUGH DETERMINATION, WITH ENOUGH CONFIDENCE, AND WITH A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE, THE SUN WILL SHINE. YOU WILL SUCCEED.

YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE I LIKE ABOUT THIS STORY? EVERYBODY IN THIS AUDIENCE KNOWS THE WORDS TO IT. EVERY ONE OF US LEARNED THAT PARABLE AS A CHILD. OUR PARENTS AND OUR PARENTS' PARENTS AND THEIR PARENTS' PARENTS PERHAPS WORKED WITH OUR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS AND MINISTERS AND ALL THE OTHER FIGURES OF LEARNING AND AUTHORITY IN OUR SOCIETY TO SEE THAT IN SOME SMALL SUBCONSCIOUS WAY WE LEARNED THAT SONG. AND GUESS WHAT? THAT IS WHAT GRADUATION IS ALL ABOUT. THAT IS WHAT THIS NATION IS ALL ABOUT—HAVING A GOAL, PURSING IT, GETTING KNOCKED DOWN, GOING THROUGH ADVERSITY, STICKING TO IT, FIGHTING THROUGH IT, HAVING THE CONFIDENCE AND THE FORTITUDE TO GET BACK UP, AND TO ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVES. AS I LOOK OUT ON THIS AUDIENCE, I SEE HUNDREDS OF ITSY BITSY SPIDERS, ALL WITH A DIFFERENT SPOUT TO CLIMB, ALL FULLY AWARE THAT ADVERSITY WILL COME, BUT I TRUST ALL EQUALLY CONFIDENT IN THE CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE YOUR OBJECTIVES NO MATTER HOW MANY REPETITIONS OR HOW LONG IT MIGHT TAKE.

ALL GRADUATES, PUT YOUR ARMS UP IN THE AIR AND WAVE THEM AROUND. COME ON, ALL YOU GRADUATES PUT YOUR ARMS UP IN THE AIR AND SHAKE THEM.

LOOK AT THAT. IF THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A SEA OF LITTLE SPIDERS, THEN YOU HAVE NO IMAGINATION!

REMEMBER THE PARABLE YOU LEARNED AS A CHILD. WHEREVER YOUR GARDEN SPOUT MIGHT BE, WHATEVER THE SHAPE OF YOUR GARDEN SPOUT, DON'T EVER GIVE UP; DON'T EVER GIVE UP. THE SUN IS GOING TO SHINE, AND YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

AS YOU LEAVE THIS INSTITUTION, YOU TAKE WITH YOU A KALEIDOSCOPE OF EXPERIENCES THAT WILL HELP SHAPE THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. DON'T FORGET WHAT HAS MADE YOUR EXPERIENCE HERE SPECIAL FOR YOU. WAS IT A FAVORITE PROFESSOR? WAS IT A SPECIAL PROGRAM? WAS IT A SPECIAL PLACE? WAS IT A SPECIAL EVENT? I ASSURE YOU THAT YOU TAKE WITH YOU MEMORIES TO LAST A LIFETIME.

STAY CLOSE TO BOWLING GREEN. I HOPE YOU CONTINUE TO WORK HERE OR GO TO WORK HERE. VALUE YOUR EDUCATION. MAKE IT CENTRAL TO THE PARABLE YOU WEAVE THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE. ONLY THROUGH THE CREATIVE ENERGIES, TALENTS, AND RESOURCES OF EVERY MEMBER OF THIS COMMUNITY CAN BOWLING GREEN CONTINUE TO PROSPER.

YOUR EXPERIENCE AT BOWLING GREEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING. THIS TALENTED FACULTY AND A DEDICATED STAFF WILL WORK HARD TO ADD VALUE TO YOUR DEGREE AND, CONSEQUENTLY, TO YOUR FUTURE.

ONLY YOU, HOWEVER, CAN ENSURE MEANINGFULNESS IN YOUR LIFE. TAKE THE INITIATIVE. LAUGH...EXPLORE...PROBE...BE CONFIDENT...ENJOY YOUR FRIENDS...LAUGH...ENJOY YOURSELF. SMILE OFTEN...WORK HARD...LAUGH...BE DILIGENT...AIM HIGH...BUT TAKE DEAD AIM ON YOUR GOALS, AND, DID I MENTION THIS—LAUGH?

RESPECT KNOWLEDGE...DON'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS...VALUE YOUR OWN. YOU AND BOWLING GREEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE HAVE BOTH INVESTED MUCH IN YOUR CAPACITY TO THINK AND REASON. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS...THEY WILL SERVE YOU WELL. SING. DANCE. ENJOY YOUTH—YOURS AND THE YOUTH OF OTHERS, BUT DON'T CORRELATE YOUTH WITH AGE. SOME OF THE MOST YOUTHFUL PEOPLE I KNOW HAVE GROWN OLD GRACEFULLY KEEP A LIGHT HEART AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF. DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH!

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS. YOU SHOULD BE PROUD. YOU ARE IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE KENTUCKY COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM FAMILY AND THIS IS YOUR BOWLING GREEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE! SAVOR IT!

6

I THANK PRESIDENT HODGES FOR ASKING ME TO BE WITH YOU. I LOOK FORWARD TO SHARING A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY WITH YOU AND BECAUSE OF YOU. BEST WISHES TO EACH OF YOU FOR A FULL LIFE, RICH IN GOOD HEALTH, AND MUCH HAPPINESS. THANK YOU.