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Electrical Completion Ceremony Dinner Remarks

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ELECTRICAL COMPLETION CEREMONY DINNER

March 25, 1978

Jay L. Nelson, President
Utah Technical College at Salt Lake

YOU'VE JUST LEARNED OF MY IMPENDING RETIREMENT FROM UTAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE--SINCE ANNOUNCING MY RETIREMENT MANY PEOPLE HAVE ASKED WHAT I PLAN TO DO--I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW OLD PRESIDENTS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST LOSE THEIR FACULTIES.

NOT SO LONG AGO I WAS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, ATTENDING A VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE, AND I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT A VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL CENTER. I PROMISED THE DEAN OF INSTRUCTION THAT I'D CALL HIM BEFORE LEAVING ATLANTA. SO THE MORNING I WAS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE, I PICKED UP THE TELEPHONE AND DIALED THE NUMBER. IT SURPRISED ME WHEN THE OPERATOR'S VOICE CAME IN ON THE LINE AND SAID, "THAT WILL BE 90 CENTS, PLEASE."

I WAS FEELING REAL PERT AND IN A JOKING MOOD THAT MORNING, AND COMMENTED, "NINETY CENTS! IN UTAH WE CAN CALL HELL AND BACK FOR 90 CENTS."

SHE SAID, "IN UTAH, THAT'S A LOCAL NUMBER, SIR."

AFTER FOUR YEARS IT'S FITTING THAT YOU GRADUATING APPRENTICES SHOULD BE HONORED FOR THE OBJECTIVE YOU HAVE ACHIEVED. YOU DESERVE TO BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT. WE ALL ENJOY BEING RECOGNIZED. ALTHOUGH THE ONLY TIME MOST PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT IS WHEN IT'S ON THE TOP OF A POLICE CAR.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SOURCE OF SATISFACTION TO ME TO PARTICIPATE IN CEREMONIES THAT MARK THE CULMINATION OF AN OBJECTIVE. I'M PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO MEET WITH YOU TONIGHT TO ENDORSE THE WORK OF THE ELECTRICAL JOINT APPRENTICESHIP COMMITTEE. UTAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE IS PROUD TO HAVE PLAYED A PART IN YOUR TRAINING PROGRAM. I ADMIRE THE MEN WHO SERVE ON THE J.A.C. COMMITTEES AND SHARE THEIR TIME AND TALENTS WITH YOU GRADUATING APPRENTICES. REPRESENTATIVES FROM UTAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE WHO ATTEND APPRENTICESHIP

March 25, 1978

CONFERENCES THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN STATES REPEATEDLY TELL ME THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL, THE J.A.C.'S AND THE COLLEGE IS OUTSTANDING IN UTAH. IT'S HARD FOR ME TO IMAGINE THAT IN SOME OF THE SURROUNDING STATES THERE IS EVIDENCE OF DISTRUST BETWEEN THOSE AGENCIES. IN SEVERAL INSTANCES THE COMMITTEES REFUSE TO MEET AT THE SCHOOLS AND IN SOME STATES RELATED TRAINING CLASSES ARE NOT CONDUCTED AT THE SCHOOLS. IT'S OUR OPINION THAT THE STATE APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL, THE J.A.C. COMMITTEE, AND THE COLLEGE ARE PARTNERS IN THE TRAINING ENDEAVOR. APPROXIMATELY 1,800 APPRENTICES HAVE BEEN ENROLLED AT UTC DURING THE PAST YEAR. THERE ARE 13 J.A.C. FUNCTIONING IN THE VALLEY.

ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREAT CRAFTSMAN IS THAT HE IS PROUD OF WHAT HE IS DOING. AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO EXEMPLIFIED THIS CHARACTERISTIC IS FOUND IN AN INCIDENT FROM THE LIFE OF BRIGHAM YOUNG.

A WRITER WHO HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR TITLES ONCE WROTE A LETTER TO BRIGHAM YOUNG. HE WAS HOPEFUL OF MAKING AN IMPRESSION ON THE MORMON LEADER AND SO HE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO HIM AS FOLLOWS: TO HIS EXCELLENCY, BRIGHAM YOUNG, GOVERNOR OF THE TERRITORY OF UTAH, PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, INDIAN AGENT OF THE TERRITORY. GOVERNOR YOUNG DID NOT NECESSARILY APPRECIATE THE PRETENSE. BUT SINCE HIS FRIEND HAD USED SOME OF HIS TITLES, HE FIGURED HE SHOULD KNOW ALL OF THEM AND SO WHEN THEY MET, GOVERNOR YOUNG BROUGHT THE MATTER UP IN THEIR CONVERSATION. HE SAID, "IN YOUR LETTER TO ME, YOU OMITTED ONE OF MY TITLES." "DO YOU MEAN THE GENERALSHIP, GOVERNOR?" "NO, NO, I MEAN, BRIGHAM YOUNG MASTER CABINETMAKER, PAINTER AND GLAZIER." HIS FRIEND WAS VERY APOLOGETIC AND HE REPLIED, "NEXT TIME I WRITE YOU, I'LL INCLUDE IT WITH THE OTHER TITLES." AND TO THIS COMMENT, BRIGHAM YOUNG REPLIED. "OMIT THE OTHER TITLES, THEY ARE ALL THE RESULT OF MY BEING A MASTER CABINET-MAKER, PAINTER AND GLAZIER."

IMAGINE A MAN ACHIEVING THE DISTINCTION OF BECOMING GOVERNOR OF UTAH, INDIAN AGENT FOR THE TERRITORY AND PRESIDENT OF HIS CHURCH SAYING, "OMIT THOSE

TITLES, THEY ARE ALL THE RESULT OF MY BEING A MASTER CABINETMAKER, PAINTER AND GLAZIER. I HOPE ALL OF US CAN BE AS PROUD OF WHAT WE'RE DOING.

I'M CONFIDENT AS I LOOK OVER THIS GROUP OF GRADUATING APPRENTICES THAT WITHIN A FEW YEARS SOME OF YOU WILL BE STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS. THAT'S AN ADMIRABLE OBJECTIVE; HOWEVER, THE TROUBLE OF BEING SELF EMPLOYED IS THAT IT TAKES ALL THE FUN OUT OF SNEERING AT THE MANAGEMENT.

OCCASIONALLY I THINK WE'VE REACHED A NEW PLATEAU IN COMMUNICATIONS! SOMEONE HAS DEVELOPED A SENSE OF FEELING FOR HIS FELLOW MAN. ABOUT THE BEST DEFINITION OF EMPATHY THAT I'VE EVER HEARD IS CONTAINED IN THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT.

A PLUMBER WAS TRYING TO CLEAN OUT SOME PIPE. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER IT WAS SAFE TO USE HYDROCHLORIC ACID OR NOT. SO HE WROTE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MEASUREMENTS IN WASHINGTON AND HE ASKED THIS SIMPLE QUESTION. "IS IT SAFE FOR ME TO PUT HYDROCHLORIC ACID IN PIPES?"

HE GOT BACK THIS LONG LETTER STATING--"THE EFFICACY OF THE METHOD IS UNDENIABLE, BUT THE SPECIFIC CORROSIVE RESIDUE IS INCOMPATIBLE IN METALLIC PERMANENCE SO WE WOULD SUGGEST AN ALTERNATE METHOD."

HE LOOKED AT IT--STUDIED IT A LONG TIME--GOT OUT HIS PENCIL--SAT DOWN AND WROTE. HE SAID, "LOOK, I'M SORRY BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND, ALL I WANT TO KNOW IS--CAN I PUT HYDROCHLORIC ACID IN PIPES?"

FINALLY AFTER BEING KICKED AROUND FROM ONE REVIEWER TO ANOTHER, SOME FELLOW READ THAT LETTER WHO HAD COMPLETE EMPATHY. HE WROTE BACK AND SAID, "DON'T DO IT, MACK. IT EATS HELL OUT OF THE PIPES!"

IF YOU FEEL REFRESHED AND LEAVE INSPIRED TONIGHT, I WON'T FEEL THAT OUR TIME HAS BEEN SPENT IN VAIN IF WE CAN DEVELOP EMPATHY FOR ONE ANOTHER.

CALIFORNIA'S GOVERNOR, EDMUND J. BROWN, JR., ATTENDED AN APPRENTICESHIP COUNCIL MEETING IN SACRAMENTO IN JANUARY. HE MADE SOME SIGNIFICANT COMMENTS AND I'D LIKE TO QUOTE A COUPLE OF PARAGRAPHS FROM THE STATEMENTS HE MADE.

"I BELIEVE APPRENTICESHIP HAS A GREAT POTENTIAL, MORE THAN HAS BEEN FULFILLED TO DATE. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS EXPANDED. I HAVE INCLUDED ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO INCREASE BY 50 PERCENT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN THE STATE, AND I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THESE PROGRAMS BE TRIPLED OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS. MY CONCEPT IS THAT MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SITTING IN CLASSROOMS, LEARNING THINGS THAT ARE NOT TAKING THEM ALONG THE PATH YOU REALLY WANT TO GO IN GETTING THEM INTO MAINSTREAM JOBS WHERE OUR SOCIETY NEEDS THEM. APPRENTICESHIP CAN PROVIDE A VERY VALUABLE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING EXPERIENCE, LINKING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INCOME TOGETHER.

"APPRENTICES SHOULD FOLLOW A PATH THAT WILL LEAD THEM INTO AN UPPER MOBILITY OR GREATER JOB SKILLS SO THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOCIETY ON THE ONE HAND, AND THEY CAN ALSO IMPROVE THEMSELVES ON THE OTHER."

AT EACH PRECEDING MILESTONE IN YOUR LIVES YOU'VE HEARD SUCH COMMENTS AS EDUCATION IS A LIFE LONG PROCESS AND GRADUATION IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A GREATER GOAL. THOSE COMMENTS BECOME MORE MEANINGFUL EVERY DAY. LIFE WILL BECOME MEANINGFUL AND GREATER SUCCESS WILL COME YOUR WAY IF YOU CONTINUE TO STUDY AND LEARN, I'D LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO RETURN TO UTC AND COMPLETE ADDITIONAL NIGHT CLASSES. IN FACT, WE NOW OFFER AN ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE TO APPRENTICES. BY TAKING AN ADDITIONAL 24 HOURS OF RELATED INSTRUCTION IN OUR EVENING PROGRAM YOU CAN QUALIFY FOR A DEGREE. I'D LIKE TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO PURSUE IT. IN FACT, I'M HERE TO TESTIFY THAT YOU'LL BE JUSTLY REWARDED FOR EACH EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE YOU ACHIEVE.

PERMIT ME TO EMPHASIZE A PHILOSOPHICAL POINT,

TRADITIONALLY, POST SECONDARY EDUCATION HAS BEEN EXPECTED TO PERFORM TWO ROLES:

1. TO PRODUCE A BROADLY EDUCATED PERSON WHO UNDERSTANDS THE WORLD AND ONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO THAT WORLD, AND
2. TO PREPARE A PERSON FOR LIFE'S WORK BY PROVIDING A MARKETABLE SKILL.

I THINK WE WILL ALL AGREE THAT THAT BOTH OF THESE ROLES ARE IMPORTANT. UNIVERSITIES SEEM TO ADVOCATE THAT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO TEACH INDIVIDUALS HOW TO THINK AND PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ADVOCATES PROVIDING SKILLED TRAINING AND ONLY THE SUPPORTIVE GENERAL EDUCATION NEEDED TO PERFORM THE TASK. PERHAPS THERE IS A NEED FOR A COMPROMISE IN BOTH AREAS.

IT'S MY OPINION THAT A MAJOR THRUST OF THE TOTAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION SHOULD BE TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THEIR LIFE'S WORK. I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE STEERED INTO STUDIES THAT WILL LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT.

OBVIOUSLY, I DON'T THINK THIS SHOULD BE THE ONLY THRUST. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN WORK, BUT WE RECOGNIZE, TOO, THAT THERE IS REALLY NO TRULY GOOD LIFE WITHOUT A GOOD JOB.

THE UNITED STATES IS A JOB ORIENTED SOCIETY. WITHOUT A JOB, YOU'RE A NOBODY. THE WORK ETHIC HAS MADE AMERICA GREAT, AND I FEEL A STRONG COMMITMENT TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE IT AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION.

IT'S YOUR LIFE AND WHAT SUCCESS YOU MAKE OF IT DEPENDS UPON YOU.

MANY YEARS AGO IN GREECE THERE WAS A MAN WHO KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS. HE WAS CALLED THE ORACLE. IT WAS HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVISE THE CITIZENS OF GREECE. BUT IN THOSE DAYS, AS NOW, THERE WERE MANY YOUTHFUL DOUBTERS WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE MISTER ANTHONY KNEW ALL THE ANSWERS. TWO DECIDED TO FIND OUT JUST HOW WISE THE OLE MAESTRO REALLY WAS.

I'M GOING TO FOOL THE ORACLE, I'M GOING TO PROVE THAT HE IS WRONG NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS.

HUH, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO THAT?

I'M GOING TO THE ORACLE, AND I'M GOING TO HOLD A SMALL BIRD IN MY HAND, AND I'LL SAY, "OH, ORACLE, IS THIS BIRD DEAD OR IS IT ALIVE?" AND IF HE SAYS, "IT'S DEAD," I'LL OPEN MY HANDS AND IT WILL FLY AWAY. HE'LL BE WRONG. AND IF HE SAYS, "IT'S ALIVE," I WILL CRUSH IT IN MY HAND. AND AGAIN HE WILL BE WRONG.

AND SO THE BOYS APPROACHED THE ORACLE AND SAID, "OH, ORACLE, WHAT DO I HOLD IN MY HAND?" AND THE ORACLE COULD SEE THE FEATHERS STICKING OUT AND HEAR THE BIRD CHIRPING.

"WHY, MY SON, YOU HAVE A BIRD IN YOUR HAND."

THE BOY SAID, "YES, I HAVE A BIRD IN MY HAND, BUT TELL ME, MR. ORACLE, IS THE BIRD ALIVE OR IS IT DEAD?"

AND THE ORACLE REPLIED--"THAT, MY SON, DEPENDS UPON YOU."

I'M CONFIDENT THAT ALL OF US WANT TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN OUR LIVES. WE WANT OUR FAMILIES, OUR FRIENDS, AND RELATIVES, AND OUR BUSINESS ASSOCIATES TO LOOK UPON US WITH PRIDE AND ADMIRE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU A FORMULA THAT WILL HELP ASSURE THAT SUCCESS. IN PAUL DUNN'S BOOK, ENTITLED ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED, HE TELLS ABOUT A RETIRED BUSINESS EXECUTIVE FRIEND OF HIS WHO WAS ASKED THE SECRET OF HIS GREAT SUCCESS. HE REPLIED THAT IT COULD ALL BE SUMMED UP IN THREE WORDS--"AND THEN SOME." I DISCOVERED AT AN EARLY AGE, HE SAID, THAT MOST OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AVERAGE PEOPLE AND TOP PEOPLE CAN BE EXPLAINED IN THOSE THREE WORDS. THE TOP PEOPLE DO WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM--AND THEN SOME. THEY ARE THOUGHTFUL AND CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS--AND THEN SOME. THEY MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FAIRLY AND SQUARELY--AND THEN SOME. THEY ARE GOOD FRIENDS TO THEIR FRIENDS--AND THEN SOME. THEY CAN BE COUNTED ON IN AN EMERGENCY--AND THEN SOME.

AND SO IT IS WHEN YOU DO WHAT YOU'VE CONTRACTED TO DO--AND THEN SOME, THEN YOUR EMPLOYER PAYS IN FULL--AND THEN SOME.

IN SUMMARY LET ME ADMONISH YOU TO CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION. EDUCATION IS A LIFELONG PROCESS. BE PROUD OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND ATTEMPT TO EXCELL IN YOUR CRAFTSMANSHIP. SUCCESS IS ACHIEVED THROUGH WORK AND DEDICATION.

IF YOU WORK FOR A MAN, IN HEAVEN'S NAME, WORK FOR HIM; SPEAK WELL OF HIM, AND THE COMPANY HE REPRESENTS.

IF YOU MUST GROWL, CONDEMN, AND ETERNALLY FIND FAULT, RESIGN YOUR POSITION AND WHEN YOU ARE ON THE OUTSIDE, DAMN TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT. BUT AS LONG AS YOU ARE A PART OF THE COMPANY, DO NOT CONDEMN IT. IF YOU DO, THE FIRST HIGH WIND THAT COMES ALONG WILL BLOW YOU AWAY, AND PROBABLY YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHY.

REMEMBER, AN OUNCE OF LOYALTY IS WORTH A POUND OF CLEVERNESS.

THIS IS A VERY UNIQUE CANDLE--I CALL IT AN ETERNAL CANDLE BECAUSE IT CONTINUES TO BURN UNTIL I EXTINGUISH IT. IT REPRESENTS THE TORCH THAT GUIDES THE WORLD. IT IS THE BEACON LIGHT THAT GUIDES YOU TOWARD ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS. IT IS SYMBOLIC OF EDUCATION. OCCASIONALLY THERE ARE MOMENTS WHEN THE FLAME HESITATES AND SEEMS TO HAVE DIED--JUST AS THERE ARE MOMENTS IN LIFE WHEN OUR PLANS SEEM NOT TO BE PROGRESSING--BUT WITH CONFIDENCE AND PATIENCE THE FLAME CONTINUES TO BURN AND SO WILL YOU CONTINUE TO ADVANCE TOWARD YOUR OBJECTIVE IF YOU ARE DILIGENT, DEPENDABLE, ENTHUSIASTIC AND LOYAL.

I ADMONISH YOU TO KEEP THE DESIRE FOR EDUCATION ALIVE--WHO KNOWS THE LIMITS OF YOUR CAPABILITY--YOU MAY BECOME AN INTELLECTUAL GIANT.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EACH OF YOU!