

**ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY
TWENTY-SIXTH CONVOCATION**

*Notes for Remarks by
Honorary Degree Recipient*

David G. McLean, O.B.C., LL.D.
Chairman of the Board

CN

*Royal Roads University
Victoria, British Columbia*

Friday, November 6, 2009 - 1400 hrs

MR. CHANCELLOR, MR. PRESIDENT, HONOURED
GUESTS AND FELLOW STUDENTS.

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME HERE TODAY TO
CELEBRATE THE TWENTY-SIXTH CONVOCATION AT
ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY.

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE AND HONOURED TO
ACCEPT THIS HONORARY DEGREE. ROYAL ROADS
IS A GREAT UNIVERSITY – DISTINGUISHED NOT
ONLY BY ITS OUTSTANDING TEACHING PROGRAMS
– BUT ALSO BY AN APPROACH TO POST-
SECONDARY EDUCATION THAT FOCUSES – IN
PRACTICAL AND INNOVATIVE WAYS ON THE
MARKETPLACE – OCCASIONALLY REFERRED TO AS
“THE REAL WORLD.”

IT IS THIS UNIQUE COMBINATION OF ACADEMIC
DISCIPLINE – WHICH IS FUNDAMENTAL TO
EDUCATION – TEMPERED BY INNOVATION,
FLEXIBILITY AND REALITY THAT SETS ROYAL
ROADS APART. FOR THOSE OF YOU FORTUNATE
ENOUGH TO HAVE EXPERIENCED THIS TYPE OF

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, BE ASSURED THAT YOUR FUTURE SUCCESSES ARE NOT DISTANT DREAMS OF LIFE IN THE "REAL" WORLD. THEY ARE, INSTEAD, A COMBINATION OF ALL OF THE PRACTICAL AND INNOVATIVE THINGS YOU HAVE LEARNED AT ROYAL ROADS – FROM YOUR TEACHERS, YOUR BOOKS, YOUR CASE STUDIES, YOUR INTERNSHIPS, YOUR COLLEAGUES, YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS – AND MOST OF ALL, YOURSELVES.

AS I THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I MIGHT SAY TODAY, I DECIDED TO SPEAK ABOUT SOME OF THE PRACTICAL AND INNOVATIVE THINGS I HAVE LEARNED IN MY OWN LIFE – THE 8 FUNDAMENTALS IF YOU WILL – THAT I BELIEVE LEAD TO SUCCESS AND OPPORTUNITY.

FIRST IS DETERMINATION

I REMEMBER GROWING UP ON THE PRAIRIES. WE WERE NOT DIRT POOR BUT WE WERE FAR FROM WELL OFF. MY FATHER, HAVING ENTERED GRADE 4 WHEN HE LOST BOTH HIS PARENTS, BEGAN HIS

WORKING CAREER AT AGE 10. IT WAS A TOUGH ERA AND PROSPECTS WERE BLEAK.

SO HE STARTED DELIVERING TELEGRAMS AND PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING ELSE THAT WOULD KEEP THE WOLF FROM THE DOOR, UNTIL ONE DAY – HE SAW AN AD FOR TRAINING FOR RAILROAD TELEGRAPHERS. HE APPLIED, AND THROUGH SHEER DETERMINATION, TAUGHT HIMSELF THE ART OF TELEGRAPHY USING MORSE CODE.

IT WAS A SKILL THAT LATER ENABLED HIM TO GET A JOB AT CN WHERE HE STAYED FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS – RETIRING IN THE 1960'S AS A TRAIN DISPATCHER FOR THE RAILROAD I NOW CHAIR.

HE ALSO SPENT 15 YEARS AS A UNION LEADER WHICH, AS A YOUNG BOY, GAVE ME GREAT INSIGHT INTO THE IMPORTANCE OF TREATING EVERYONE IN THE WORKPLACE, FAIRLY.

I AM TELLING YOU THIS STORY BECAUSE IT GAVE ME A FRAMEWORK FOR MY LIFE IN WHICH EXAMPLES OF DETERMINATION WERE FUNDAMENTAL. MY FATHER'S INFLUENCE AND

EXAMPLE SHOWED ME THE VALUE OF DETERMINATION AND IT IS A LESSON I HAVE CARRIED INTO MANY A BOARDROOM.

I BELIEVE THAT IF YOU ARE DETERMINED, YOU CAN CONQUER ANYTHING.

SECOND IS FOCUS

I HAVE LEARNED THAT YOU BUILD YOUR LIFE BRICK BY BRICK – ALWAYS ADDING TO YOUR LIFE – AS IF IT WAS THE FOUNDATION OF A BUILDING. I HAVE ALSO LEARNED THAT EACH EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE, TEACHES YOU SOMETHING – EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY SURE WHAT THAT IS, AT THE TIME.

WHEN I WAS 14, A NEIGHBOUR ASKED ME IF I WANTED TO WORK IN A WAREHOUSE FOR THE SUMMER. DID I! ALL MY BUDDIES DELIVERED NEWSPAPERS AND HERE I WAS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO WORK IN A REAL JOB – A WAREHOUSE JOB.

WELL, IT STARTED OUT OKAY – I WAS PACKING ORDERS IN A DRUG WHOLESale WAREHOUSE FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS – A JOB I TOOK SERIOUSLY – AND RIGHTFULLY SO. THEN THE SUPERVISOR SAID TO ME – OH, BY THE WAY – YOU’LL BE FILLING IN FOR TED WOODS, THE JANITOR, FOR THE NEXT 3 WEEKS WHILE HE GOES ON HOLIDAY.

THREE WEEKS? THAT’S A LONG TIME WHEN YOU’RE 14.

I HAD TWO CHOICES. QUIT AND RETURN TO DELIVERING PAPERS LIKE THE REST OF MY FRIENDS – OR STAY AND BECOME THE BEST JANITOR THEY EVER HAD. FOR WHATEVER REASON – PRIDE OR DETERMINATION – I CHOSE THE LATTER AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE THE BEST THING I COULD HAVE DONE.

FOR THE NEXT 3 WEEKS, I WORKED HARD BECAUSE I WAS DETERMINED TO DO A GREAT JOB AND PUT THE EXPERIENCE BEHIND ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE RESULT, HOWEVER, WAS AN OFFER TO WORK IN THE WAREHOUSE FOR THE NEXT 3 SUMMERS – A JOB THAT WAS VERY

FINANCIALLY REWARDING AND INCLUDED RELIEVING THE JANITOR FOR 3 WEEKS, EACH SUMMER.

THAT WAS OVER 50 YEARS AGO BUT I HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN THE EXPERIENCE. IT MAY HAVE TESTED MY DETERMINATION BUT IT TAUGHT ME THE IMPORTANCE OF FOCUSING ON THE JOB AT HAND – NO MATTER WHAT IT IS. IT ALSO TAUGHT ME THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A JANITOR FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE – ALTHOUGH I GAINED CONSIDERABLE RESPECT FOR THE WORK THEY HAD TO DO.

THIRD IS REPUTATION

THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN YOUR LIFE IS YOUR REPUTATION. PRESERVE AND PROTECT IT WITH ALL YOUR ENERGY AS IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU HAVE.

YOUR REPUTATION WILL BE REFLECTED IN THE CHOICES YOU MAKE. WE ALL HAVE TO MAKE CHOICES BUT IF WE BASE OUR DECISIONS ON SOUND PRINCIPLES – PRINCIPLES THAT PLACE

OUR INTEGRITY FIRST – EVEN THE TOUGHEST CHOICES CAN BE FACED.

WHEN YOU ARE FACED WITH A TOUGH CHOICE THEN, THINK CAREFULLY WHICH ROUTE TO CHOOSE – BECAUSE IT IS OFTEN NOT THE MOST POPULAR CHOICE THAT MAY BE THE BEST FOR YOU.

AS A BOY, I WAS INTRODUCED TO THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST, WHO EXPRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT ALWAYS TAKING THE EASY ROUTE IN HIS POEM, THE ROAD NOT TAKEN, WHEN HE WROTE:

TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A YELLOW WOOD,
AND SORRY I COULD NOT TRAVEL BOTH
AND BE ONE TRAVELER, LONG I STOOD
AND LOOKED DOWN ONE AS FAR AS I COULD
TO WHERE IT BENT IN THE UNDERGROWTH;

THEN TOOK THE OTHER, AS JUST AS FAIR,
AND HAVING PERHAPS THE BETTER CLAIM
BECAUSE IT WAS GRASSY AND WANTED WEAR;

THOUGH AS FOR THAT THE PASSING THERE
HAD WORN THEM REALLY ABOUT THE SAME,

AND BOTH THAT MORNING EQUALLY LAY
IN LEAVES NO STEP HAD TRODDEN BLACK.
OH, I KEPT THE FIRST FOR ANOTHER DAY!
YET KNOWING HOW WAY LEADS ON TO WAY,
I DOUBTED IF I SHOULD EVER COME BACK.

I SHALL BE TELLING THIS WITH A SIGH
SOMEWHERE AGES AND AGES HENCE:
TWO ROADS DIVERGED IN A WOOD, AND I –
I TOOK THE ONE LESS TRAVELED BY,
AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

FROST WAS VERY INSIGHTFUL ABOUT MAKING
CHOICES.

FOURTH IS GIVING

WE USED TO CALL IT CHARITY BUT “CHARITY” IS A
WORD THAT IMPLIES THAT THE GIVER IS
SOMEHOW GREATER THAN THE RECEIVER. REAL
GIVING IS SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER.

YOU HAVE ALL RECEIVED A GREAT FOUNDATION FOR YOUR FUTURE HERE AT ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY – YOU HAVE PREPARED YOURSELVES FOR THE REAL WORLD AND – WITH FOCUS AND DETERMINATION, YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

BUT AS YOU REACH THE MILESTONES FOR SUCCESS THAT YOU HAVE SET FOR YOURSELVES – THE TIME WILL COME FOR YOU TO GIVE BACK.

REMEMBER THOSE WHO HELPED YOU GET THERE AND THEN – AS THE MOVIE SAYS – PAY IT FORWARD.

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS CONSTANTLY HELPING PEOPLE WHO NEED ENCOURAGEMENT – A LITTLE FUNDING – OR PERHAPS JUST A WELL-DESERVED PAT ON THE BACK. WHEN ASKED HOW THEY CAN REPAY HIM, HE ALWAYS SAYS THE SAME THING – HELP SOMEONE ELSE WHO NEEDS IT!

IT SOUNDS SIMPLISTIC BUT IF WE ALL THOUGHT – AND ACTED – THIS WAY, WHAT A CIVILIZED WORLD WE COULD CREATE.

ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE POWER OF GIVING IS MARC AND CRAIG KIELBURGER'S FREE THE CHILDREN FOUNDATION. IT WAS FOUNDED BY CRAIG WHEN HE WAS ONLY 12 YEARS OLD BUT SINCE THEN, HAS BECOME A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT – DRIVEN BY THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING ONESELF TO THE COMMUNITY FOR THE GREATER GOOD. IT IS VALIDATION THAT IF YOU THINK “WE” INSTEAD OF “ME”, WE ARE ALL ON THE RECEIVING END.

IT SEEMS THEN THAT THE CLICHÉS ARE TRUE. IT REALLY IS BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE. SO PAY IT FORWARD – PAY IT OFTEN – AND PAY IT WITH AN OPEN AND GRATEFUL HEART

FIFTH IS MISTAKES

YOU WILL MAKE MISTAKES. I WISH I COULD PROMISE YOU OTHERWISE BUT I CAN'T. NO ONE CAN. MISTAKES WILL BE MADE – AND YOU WILL MAKE THEM. WHAT THEN?

LEARN FROM THEM.

LET ME ILLUSTRATE HOW MISTAKES CAN TEACH YOU A LESSON BY TELLING YOU ABOUT ONE (AND THERE HAVE BEEN MANY) OF THE MISTAKES I MADE IN BUSINESS.

IN THE EARLY 1980'S, I INVESTED \$500,000 IN THE PURCHASE OF A 250 FOOT YACHT OWNED ONCE BY JOHN DAVID EATON, THE FOUNDER OF EATON'S – AGAINST THE RATHER STRONG ADVICE OF MY WIFE.

THERE WAS A GROUP OF INVESTORS – I OWNED 10% – AND WE PLANNED TO RENOVATE THE YACHT AND SELL IT OUT, IN TIME SHARE UNITS. THE WHOLE THING TURNED OUT TO BE A DISASTER. NOT ONLY DID WE LOSE ALL OF OUR INVESTMENT, BUT WE HAD ALSO GUARANTEED A LOAN AT THE BANK AND WE ALL HAD TO PAY IT OFF. IT WAS A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE!

YACHTS ARE NOT AN INVESTMENT – THEY ARE A HOLE IN THE WATER IN WHICH TO THROW MONEY.

WHAT DID I LEARN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?

SEVERAL THINGS:

1. NEVER INVEST IN ANYTHING THAT FLOATS.
 2. NEVER INVEST WITH A GROUP WHERE YOU ARE NOT IN CONTROL OF THE INVESTMENT.
 3. NEVER LET AVAILABLE CASH BURN A HOLE IN YOUR POCKET, YOU CAN LOSE MONEY FAST WHEN YOU HAVE TOO MUCH READY CASH ON-HAND.
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4. AND FINALLY - AND MOST IMPORTANTLY - LISTEN TO YOUR WIFE!

SIXTH IS LOYALTY

NEVER FORGET THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THERE FOR YOU IN DIFFICULT TIMES. THERE'S AN OLD EXPRESSION – BE NICE TO PEOPLE ON YOUR WAY UP BECAUSE YOU'LL BE MEETING THEM AGAIN ON YOUR WAY DOWN.

LOYALTY IS MADE UP OF FRIENDSHIP AND LOOKING OUT FOR THOSE YOU HOLD DEAR IN YOUR LIFE. WHEN I LOOK BACK AT MY LIFE, THERE ARE MANY LOYAL RELATIONSHIPS I HAVE RELIED ON OVER MANY, MANY YEARS – RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO LOOKED OUT FOR ME – AND I, FOR THEM. THESE ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT MAKE YOUR LIFE MOST MEANINGFUL.

SEVENTH IS SPIRITUALITY

FOR SOME – SPIRITUALITY COMES EASILY AND IN TRADITIONAL WAYS. FOR OTHERS – IT'S A PERSONAL AND PRIVATE JOURNEY. FOR MYSELF – I'VE LEARNED TO BELIEVE IN SOMETHING BIGGER THAN MYSELF. A STRONG SPIRITUAL VIEW OF LIFE WILL CARRY YOU THROUGH THE ROUGH SPOTS AND GIVE YOU PERSPECTIVE DURING THE TOUGHEST TIMES IN YOUR LIFE.

EIGHTH IS INSPIRATION

WE COME NOW TO THE END AND I HAVE SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST.

I CALL THEM "THE GREAT ONES" – THEY ARE THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO GIVE US INSPIRATION AT DIFFERENT STAGES IN OUR LIVES. SOMETIMES WE KNOW THEM PERSONALLY. SOMETIMES WE ONLY KNOW OF THEM. EITHER WAY, THEY HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON OUR LIVES THAT IS PROFOUND, LIFELONG AND DEEPLY MEANINGFUL.

ONE OF THE GREAT ONES WHO BECAME A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE WAS JACK POOLE, THE CHAIR OF THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS.

JACK DIED ON OCTOBER 22ND – TWO WEEKS AGO – AFTER A TWO AND A HALF YEAR BATTLE WITH PANCREATIC CANCER.

HE WAS A GREAT ONE.

HUMBLE, FUNNY, MISCHIEVOUS AND ALWAYS MAKING OTHERS BETTER THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD BE. I WORKED WITH JACK ON THE COMMITTEE TO WIN THE BID FOR VANCOUVER AND WHISTLER TO HOST THE 2010 WINTER OLYMPICS.

HE WAS AN INCREDIBLE LEADER – ALWAYS UP, ALWAYS PREPARED, ALWAYS DETERMINED, ALWAYS FOCUSED AND ALWAYS GIVING OF HIMSELF TO OTHERS.

HE LEFT A HUGE LEGACY BUT MOST OF IT WAS IN THE SIMPLE THINGS HE TAUGHT HIS FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, FAMILY AND OTHERS ABOUT THE VALUE OF KINDNESS, OF COURAGE, AND OF HUMOUR – NO MATTER HOW TOUGH THINGS WERE.

WE ALL HAVE HEROES – THE GREAT ONES WHO HELP US REALIZE OUR DREAMS BY MAKING IT SEEM SO EASY – AND WORTHWHILE. THEY REMIND US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DREAMING BIG. IT IS AMAZING WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU SET YOUR SIGHTS FOR THE TOP – HOW OFTEN YOU ACTUALLY GET THERE WHEN YOU TRY. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF INTENTION!

AMONG MY HEROES GROWING UP IN THE 1960'S WERE MEMBERS OF THE KENNEDY FAMILY – JOHN, ROBERT AND LATER, EDWARD. THEY WERE EACH LEADERS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT – PEOPLE

DETERMINED TO DREAM BIG – DESPITE THE OBSTACLES AND CONSEQUENCES THEY FACED. AS TIME PASSED, I – LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD – WATCHED THEIR LIVES – AND DEATHS – UNFOLD. BUT THROUGH IT ALL, I ADMIRERD THEM FOR THE DREAMS THEY HAD AND THE THINGS THEY ACCOMPLISHED WITH THEIR COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP.

SO AS YOU GO FORTH AFTER YOUR GRADUATION FROM THIS WONDERFUL UNIVERSITY – BUILD YOUR FUTURE ON A ROCK-SOLID REPUTATION – STAY FOCUSED AND DETERMINED – GIVE WHAT YOU CAN (AND THEN GIVE A LITTLE MORE) – AND ABOVE ALL ELSE – REMEMBER THE GREAT ONES AND DARE TO DREAM BIG. IF YOU DO – YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

I WANT TO LEAVE YOU NOW WITH MY VERY FAVOURITE QUOTE – IT'S FROM ROBERT KENNEDY – SPOKEN NOT LONG BEFORE HE WAS ASSASSINATED. HE WAS A COURAGEOUS HUMAN BEING AND HE HAD BIG DREAMS. HE SAID:

“SOME MEN SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE AND ASK
WHY? I DREAM DREAMS THAT NEVER WERE AND
SAY – WHY NOT?”

GOOD LUCK AND GOD BLESS!