

## **EAGLE SCOUT AWARDS DINNER**

**August 5, 2004**

Parents, family members, friends of  
scouting, Eagle Scouts...

DURING MY YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE, I'VE HAD  
MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT WITH SCOUTS  
AND SCOUT LEADERS AND TO SEE THE  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF SCOUTING, IN THE GOOD  
THAT SCOUTS DO FOR THEIR COMMUNITY AND  
ESPECIALLY THE GOOD THAT SCOUTING ... BOY  
SCOUTS AND GIRL SCOUTS... DOES TO HELP YOUNG  
MEN AND WOMEN PREPARE FOR THE CHALLENGES  
OF LIFE TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE, PRODUCTIVE  
CITIZENS.

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BUT I MUST CONFESS A FEW REGRETS... MAINLY THAT I DIDN'T GET INVOLVED IN SCOUTING WHEN I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY SUCH AS THE YOUNG MEN WE ARE RECOGNIZING TONIGHT.

I NEVER REALLY GOT TO ENJOY SOME OF THE RUSTIC EXPERIENCES UNIQUE TO SCOUTING, SUCH AS THE JOY OF GETTING A SHINY NEW SCOUT KNIFE, TRYING TO WHITTLE MY FIRST STICK -- AND PROMPTLY CUTTING MYSELF.

I DIDN'T LEARN HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN A NEW FRECKLE AND A TICK.

I DON'T KNOW 100 USES FOR A BANDANA OR 125 USES FOR A LEATHER SHOELACE.

AND I CERTAINLY DIDN'T WALK AROUND TOWN LOOKING FOR LITTLE OLD LADIES TO HELP --

HOWEVER, I HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF KISSING A LOT OF BABIES...

AND IF IT WAS NOT FOR THE RESEARCH I DID ON THIS SPEECH, I WOULD NOT KNOW THAT PLANTS WITH "LEAVES OF THREE" ARE NOT A WISE EMERGENCY SUBSTITUTE FOR CHARMIN.

SCOUTS ARE AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN AMERICA...AND EAGLES...A RANK ACHIEVED BY ONLY TWO-PERCENT OF BOY SCOUTS, REPRESENT THE BEST OF THE BEST.

HOW MANY AMERICANS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE VARIOUS FACETS OF BOY SCOUTING?

THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES TODAY IS APPROACHING 300-MILLION. IF YOU WERE TO COUNT THE NUMBER OF YOUTHS INVOLVED IN THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA SINCE 1910 – IT WOULD AMOUNT TO WELL OVER ONE-THIRD OF THE POPULATION OF OUR NATION --- 110 MILLION.

THE NUMBER OF EAGLE SCOUTS AMONG ALL SCOUTS, COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL POPULATION TODAY OF 294-MILLION...WOULD BE THE EQUIVALENT OF SOMEWHAT LESS THAN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN. (5.5 MILLION)

YOU EAGLE SCOUTS ARE IN RARE AND HONORABLE COMPANY.

EACH OF YOU IS A MARKED MAN – AND I SAY THAT IN THE MOST POSITIVE WAY.

BY ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT, YOU HAVE PROVEN TO YOUR FAMILIES, TO YOUR SCHOOL, TO YOUR COMMUNITY, BUT MOSTLY TO YOURSELVES, THAT YOU ARE A PERSON OF YOUR WORD – A “CAN DO” PERSON.

THESE ARE VERY IMPORTANT TRAITS TO HAVE AS A FOUNDATION FOR A FULFILLING LIFE, AND THEY ARE TRAITS FOUND IN MOST OF THIS NATION’S GREAT LEADERS.

THESE TRAITS TELL ALL OF US – THAT YOU ARE YOUNG MEN OF ACTION.

AND ALL OF LIFE’S GIFTS, WITHOUT ACTION, DO NOT TAKE US VERY FAR.

A 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TIBETAN MANUSCRIPT ENTITLED “UNTO THEE I GRANT” SAYS IT WELL:

"MY DREAMS ARE WORTHLESS, MY PLANS ARE DUST, MY GOALS ARE IMPOSSIBLE.

"ALL ARE OF NO VALUE UNLESS THEY ARE FOLLOWED BY ACTION.

~~"I WILL ACT NOW."~~

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PUT IT IN ANOTHER WAY...." **I am a strong believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."**

YOUR PREDECESSORS INCLUDE MANY MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS AND SENATE...ASTRONAUTS...MILITARY LEADERS...CABINET MEMBERS...BUSINESS LEADERS LIKE SAM WALTON, THE FOUNDER OF WAL-MART...

NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS...WILLIAM DEVRIES, THE DOCTOR WHO FIRST SUCCESSFULLY TRANSPLANTED THE HUMAN HEART...RELIGIOUS LEADERS... LEGENDS IN SPORTS...FILM DIRECTOR STEPHEN SPIELBERG AND A PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED

STATES...GERALD FORD, AN ORPHAN WHO SAID BOY SCOUTS WAS INVALUABLE IN SHAPING HIS LIFE.

EAGLE SCOUTS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN WHAT THEY DO, AND STAND UP FOR WHAT THEY BELIEVE IS RIGHT...SUCH AS FORMER THIRD PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND BILLIONAIRE BUSINESS LEADER H. ROSS PEROT.

I MEET A LOT OF PEOPLE IN MY LINE OF WORK – PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE I MEET DON'T REALLY HAVE MUCH SPARK – THEY AREN'T ANIMATED, THEY OFTEN SEEM GLUM, THEY ARE HESITANT... LACKING IN CONFIDENCE.

IF YOU ASK THEM, THEY OFTEN ARE QUICK TO TELL YOU THAT IT IS NOT THEIR FAULT.

IF THEY GET FIRED FROM A JOB, IT'S BECAUSE THEIR EMPLOYER WAS UNFAIR.

IF THEY GET INTO TROUBLE, IT'S BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE MADE THEM DO IT, OR THEY WERE IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME, OR THEIR PARENTS DON'T LISTEN TO THEM.

I RARELY SEE THOSE TRAITS IN YOUNG MEN WHO ARE ACTIVE BOY SCOUTS, AND ALMOST NEVER IN EAGLE SCOUTS. ~~BECAUSE~~ YOU HAVE DEVELOPED AN ADDITIONAL VIRTUE BECAUSE OF YOUR SCOUTING EXPERIENCES...CHARACTER.

**AND YOU ARE MEN OF CHARACTER. THAT ONE TRAIT THAT SEPARATES ALL OF US INTO TWO CATEGORIES: THOSE WHO HAVE IT AND THOSE WHO DON'T.**

**THOSE WHO DON'T BLAME OTHERS, OR LOOK FOR EXCUSES, BUT <sup>most</sup> WHO PERSERVERE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY ~~ONLY~~ ON THE HIGH MORAL ROAD KNOWING THAT A HIGHER POWER FAR EXCEEDS OUR EARTHLY DESIRES.**



**A MAN WHO KNOWS OF SUCH THINGS SAID...**

**“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.”**

**Abraham Lincoln (1809 - 1865)**

THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE WILL ALWAYS BE IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO YOUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE, HONED BY YOUR CHARACTER, REGARDLESS OF YOUR POSITION OR THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT PRESENT THEMSELVES TO YOU.

QUALITY IS NEVER AN ACCIDENT.

QUALITY IS THE RESULT OF SPECIFIC INTENTION, SINCERE EFFORT AND SKILLFUL AND CAREFUL EXECUTION.

IT REPRESENTS THE WISE CHOICE, AND THE RIGHT CHOICE, FROM AMONG LIFE'S MANY ALTERNATIVES.

EACH OF YOU, AS EAGLE SCOUTS, NOW POSSESS A GREAT SKILL – A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE.

USE THAT SKILL—THAT GIFT, LET IT GROW WITHIN YOU, NEVER ABANDON IT.

LASTLY, AND PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, USE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED IN ACHIEVING EAGLE SCOUT TO JOYFULLY PRACTICE ONE OF THE PRIME TENANTS OF THE FOUNDER OF SCOUTING, SIR ROBERT BADEN-POWELL, WHO SAID, **“THE MOST WORTH-WHILE THING IS TO TRY TO PUT HAPPINESS INTO THE LIVES OF OTHERS.”**

YOU CAN BE RICH...YOU CAN BE  
POWERFUL...BUT YOU WILL NEVER ACHIEVE THE  
SATISFACTION, THE SELF-FULFILLMENT OF SPIRIT, OF  
ONE WHO USES THEIR GIFTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS TO  
THE BENEFIT OF THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.

WINSTON CHURCHILL ONCE SAID..." **We make a  
living by what we get; we make a life by what  
we give.**"

THE LITTLE OLD LADY WHO NEEDS HELP  
CROSSING THE STREET?...SHE'S A SYMBOL...A  
SYMBOL OF EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD WHO  
FACES A CHALLENGE IN TODAY'S WORLD.

HELP THEM CROSS THAT STREET. IF YOU DO,  
YOU WILL FIND YOUR OWN STREET TO BE A WOODED  
PATH IN THE SUNSHINE.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENT  
AND THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SHARE IN  
THIS MEMORABLE EVENT.

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FIRST, ALLOW ME TO TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO  
EXPRESS MY DEEP GRATITUDE FOR BEING INVITED  
TO ATTEND AND TO SPEAK TO YOU THIS EVENING,  
AND FOR THE GREAT HONOR YOU HAVE GIVEN ME BY  
RECOGNIZING MY EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THIS  
COMMUNITY.

I CERTAINLY WAS NOT EXPECTING TO RECEIVE  
ANY KIND OF AWARD HERE MYSELF, BUT LET ME  
ASSURE YOU, I AM VERY GRATEFUL AND VERY  
HUMBLED.

I VIEW WORKING TO MAKE MY COMMUNITY  
BETTER AS MY JOB – IT IS WHAT I PROMISED MY  
EMPLOYERS – THE PEOPLE OF THE 57<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE  
DISTRICT AND ALL PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS – THAT  
I WOULD DO WHEN I FIRST RAN FOR STATE OFFICE.

IT'S A PROMISE I HAVE TRIED HARD TO KEEP.