

State Representative Tom Tangretti

Remarks for Triangle Tech Graduation Ceremony

Friday, Oct. 22, 2004

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Good evening, and thank you all very much for inviting me to be a part of your graduation ceremony.

I'd like to start out by thanking and congratulating the administration, faculty and staff of Triangle Tech here in Greensburg.

Many of my constituents have gone through degree programs here in past several years, and have earned not just a degree but a terrific boost to their career momentum and their personal pride.

It's been awhile since my own graduation, but the years that have passed since then have provided

me with a huge range of experience, both personally and professionally.

I suppose that's why I've been invited to speak to you this evening... administrators here probably believe I've gained some amount of wisdom that I can pass on to you.

I promise to do my best.

*- Go to Caltech -  
Vet / Veterinarian -  
unlike Acme  
can't have it both ways -*

I believe strongly that there are a few key attributes that are crucial to long-term success in your career and your life.

The degree you are receiving today, everything you've learned here, in high school and in grade school, and the relationships you've forged to this point are all extremely beneficial in giving you a leg up in life.

Believe me, you will make use of this education and those relationships every day for the rest of your life.

But by itself, your education is not enough to ensure success.

We all define success differently, and I'm not talking about money or titles, but something bigger: equating success with doing what you love, making a difference, feeling a real sense of accomplishment.

This applies no matter what you do with what you have learned here, or what career you build for yourself.

In any endeavor you choose, a common set of characteristics are key to success.

In my experience, those attributes are passion, commitment, teamwork and common sense.

This perspective was shared by the late Robert F. Kennedy, who said: "The future does not belong to those who are content with today and timid and fearful in the face of bold projects and ideas.

“Rather, it will belong to those who can blend passion, reason and courage.”

I'd like to tell you a story this evening.

It has to do with an article I was reading in a business magazine a few months ago, and I think it will resonate particularly with some of the graduates of the business program here at Triangle Tech, but its lesson is pertinent to anyone who wants to know just what kind of commitment, cooperation, common sense, passion and courage is necessary to succeed at whatever you choose to do.

On September 11, 2001, the 6,000 New York-based employees of Lehman Brothers, the investment banking firm, were housed in the World Financial Center, a building in the World Trade Center complex.

As we all know, within a few hours that day, their facility was completely destroyed.



Lehman Brothers was fortunate in that all but one of its 6,000 employees got out of the area safely, but the fact remained that beginning on September 12, those 6,000 people had no place to work, and Lehman Brothers' most important facility in the world no longer existed.

Now, any of you who know anything about investment banking know that these days, it depends on technology and sophisticated telecommunications capabilities.

After September 11, Lehman Brothers no longer had any of that...but they still had millions of clients that were depending on them to continue doing business.

Senior people in the Lehman Brothers firm committed themselves to recreating their business in as short a time as possible, and over the next several days, that's exactly what they did, starting from scratch.

Lehman Brothers was open for business when the markets reopened the next week.

How did they do it?

They turned some rented office space the company had in New Jersey into their trading floor.

They made a deal with two Manhattan hotels to house their investment bankers – they took out the beds and moved in desks and chairs.

Other firms -- even their competitors -- lent office space to Lehman Brothers.

The firm ended up housing the 6,000 people who had been at one location in 45 different locations in the New York City area.

Everyone in the firm pitched in, in whatever way they could.

Investment bankers carried furniture and computers.

Customer service representatives doubled as security guards.

Some of the firm's top finance managers took shopping trips to Office Depot and other locations for pencils, paper, staplers and calculators.

The point is, they did what they needed to do to get the firm back up and running...and they saved not just their own jobs, but the finances of many of their clients, as well.

In the end, they held their firm together, and they did it with the attributes I talked about a few minutes ago: passion, commitment, teamwork common sense and courage.

Now, I realize this story doesn't have much to do with you personally, or my job as a state representative.

For many of you, investment banking may be about as familiar as brain surgery...I know it is for me.

But when I was asked to speak here tonight and was thinking about what I would say to you, this story immediately popped into my head.

I think it is a great illustration of the kind of passion, commitment, common sense and teamwork that I rely on every day to make myself successful, and to help my constituents and this entire region.

And, I think it illustrates very well the kind of passion, commitment, common sense and teamwork that all of you will rely on as you move into your careers, as you change careers, as you live the rest of your lives.

None of you, nor me, for that matter, are ever likely to face the challenges on the job that the people of Lehman Brothers in New York did ... to see firsthand that kind destruction and loss of life, and to not only within days return to work, but to rebuild a company basically from the ground up.

But be assured that you will face stiff challenges – job losses, career changes, personal losses – and to overcome those challenges you will need to heed Robert F. Kennedy’s words: the future is not for the timid and fearful, but rather, for the passionate, the reasonable and the courageous.

Both as individuals, and as a society, we face many challenges today, as I’m sure all of you are aware.

The entry-level job market is extremely difficult, and all the talk of success that you hear every day and that many of you pursued your education here in hopes of attaining, might seem a long way off.

The economy and the job market of the past few years reminds me of that movie title, The Perfect Storm.

The Internet and technology bubble burst; the global economy has been weak, corporate scandals fill the

news and geopolitical events around the world sure aren't helping things much, either.

Every piece of good news we hear seems to be countered by something worse – every time our economy seems to move forward, or the situation abroad seems to be improving, we are forced to deal with a new setback.

But deal with these setbacks we do, as we always have.

The events each of us deals with in 2004 are different in specifics, but in truth the course of history has not changed much in principle throughout the ages.

This challenging environment for our nation and for you will improve.

Our economy will recover.

Things will get better overseas.

And when you experience a setback, there will be a light at the end of the tunnel.

You will have to work to reach that light, but it is reachable.

I know that none of you would be sitting here tonight if you did not believe that.

And you should believe it – I promise you that it is true.

I believe that we all make our own success.

The world is a large and random place – and sometimes events conspire against us.

But no matter what challenges you may face over the course of your working lives, the future will belong to you if you approach it with passion and commitment, with the ability to work as part of a team, with common sense, and with courage.

Tonight marks an important step you've already taken on that journey.

You will take many more and that are equally and even more important.

The point is, keep walking in this direction.

I hope that you all enjoy your graduation celebrations, because enjoyment is a very important part of the process.

Tonight, I've talked a little bit about what I believe some of the character traits are for success.

Remember to enjoy your success whenever you experience it – and in whatever manner or measure it comes.

After all, that is the point of it all, anyway.

Success will not fulfill you if you do not allow it to, so keep striving for success throughout your life, but remember to savor it along the way, as well.



And one final thought...About twenty years ago in a Presidential election this phrase became famous, "Just ask yourself, are you better off today that you were four years ago?". Does anyone remember that line? Without getting into the political discussion or making editorial comments about that election or what that phrase meant to the presidential race I do want to use it for our purposes tonight.

I would suggest that as you go forward from tonight perhaps <sup>please</sup> I can ~~ask you~~ to consider another perspective. Instead of asking, am I better off? Perhaps you and I, and all of us, should be asking are **we** better off? And **we** in the editorial sense not the personal sense.

**We**, meaning not only our families, and extended families, our state <sup>OR EVEN OUR</sup> and nation but the **we** of the entire world. The **we** is all of us, <sup>humans -</sup> ~~all people~~ of the

world. Again I'm not speaking in a political sense but a perspective of our view of what's expected of us as citizens of the world.

You, who have your whole lives ahead of you--your career, ~~enhanced immeasurably by triangle tech,~~ your families, <sup>AM</sup> ~~all I ask~~ <sup>ING</sup> is that you just consider "what you can do to make the world a better place than it was before." And you can define that anyway you feel comfortable, but please consider this perspective. <sup>firmly</sup> <sup>no</sup> <sup>know</sup> And I believe by doing this you'll find that your personal lives will be brighter and more rewarding.

Thank you very much for letting me share in this evening's success with all of you.

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