

Rep. Tom Tangretti

Remarks to graduates of Triangle Tech

Friday, Nov. 4, 2005

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Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you this evening.

First, I want to congratulate all of the graduates and their families on this accomplishment.

And second, I want to give you some good news: I believe that in 2005, there are more opportunities for graduates with your education and your skills to succeed right here in Pennsylvania than at any time in quite a few years.

In Harrisburg, I have been part of a comprehensive effort to grow Pennsylvania's economy, and its jobs, by making significant changes to how we educate our future workers, how we attract new businesses and jobs to our regions, and how we prepare ourselves to compete in the future economy.

Those efforts – like matching the education we provide in Pennsylvania to the types of skills that our businesses need – are starting to pay off.

In many areas we can see a turnaround beginning, and once these efforts really begin to take hold, I believe Pennsylvania will once again be a state to be reckoned, and that our residents and their skills will be in demand not just here in Pennsylvania, but around the country and the world.

You are now poised to fill that demand.

Our efforts in Harrisburg are just one part of the puzzle, though.

It's important for others – like the state and private enterprise and schools -- to provide you with the opportunity to succeed.

It is your responsibility to take that opportunity and do something with it.

As a graduate of Triangle Tech, each of you not only has the job skills you need to be financially successful, but you also have knowledge of how to compete in the job market.

And, of course, we all want you to be successful in the world of work – to find a great job, to pay your bills on time, to repay your student loans, and to provide for yourself and your family.

I'm sure all of you want those things too.

But I'd also like to remind you that, as important as those things are, there is something else that you should want, as well.

As you leave here tonight, I'd like you to consider two things.

First, what you do for your paycheck should make you feel good about yourself and your skills.

And second, what you do for your paycheck should make others feel good about you.

When I've had the opportunity to speak before in similar situations, I've always said that it should not matter to anyone but you what you do for a living – as long as its legal and as long as it's something

you like – because you are going to be doing it for a very long time.

My hope is that the career you have begun building for yourself here at Triangle Tech will be much more than just a means to an end.

That it will fulfill you as well as support you.

And my second hope is that whatever you do with this education will support and fulfill not just you, but others as well.

All of us – your teachers, your family and friends, your future employers – challenge you to use your degree to find career success.

Beyond a celebration, that's really what tonight is about.

But I also challenge you to find personal and spiritual success.

What will make you content?

What will make you happy?

What will feed your soul?

As you graduate tonight, you need to ponder these questions, as well as “Where will I work,” “What kind of job will I do?” and “How much will I earn?”

Your degree provides you with clues – and a head start – on answering these kinds of questions.

Your life experiences – and the people who have shaped those experiences – provide you with the clues to answer the other questions.

Somewhere in your gut right now, if you are honest with yourself, you know there are people who made a huge difference in your life at a critical time just by being there for you -- by listening, by offering support, by saying a kind word, even by offering constructive criticism.

I want all of you to think of those people right now.

That thought is the most important thing I want to leave you with tonight – along with this challenge:

As you work hard in your new career, prosper financially, and become a success, don't forget to take the opportunity to become one of those people you are thinking about right now.

Treat everyone with respect, even those who don't agree with you.

Listen and offer constructive suggestions when someone needs help.

Set your own concerns and problems aside long enough to help someone else with their load of troubles.

Be compassionate to other people.

If you can meet that challenge, it doesn't really matter how you meet the career challenge.

If you meet that challenge, you can be a state representative, a nurse, an accountant, a welder, or the person who picks up the garbage on the curb and throws it into the truck, and still make a difference in your community and the lives of others every single day.

Take the skills you learned at Triangle Tech, apply

them in the world of work, and it is more than just likely that what you do from here on out will make you happy.

But take the lessons you have learned from those around you who have had a profound impact on bringing you to this point in life, combine those lessons with those you learned here, and I promise that what you do from here on out will also make others happy.

In our society today, one is just as important, if not more important, than the other.

I wish you all of the success, happiness and contentment that your new career brings you.

And, I hope to one day to hear about all of the success, happiness and contentment each of you has given to others.

Thank you for allowing me to share some of these thoughts with you tonight.

I hope I provided something important for all of you to think about as you embark on the rest of your journey, and I congratulate you again on the important milestone this evening marks on that journey.

Thank you.

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