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**COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**

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**AMENITIES:**

Good morning everyone. Thank you Chancellor Kulkarni. Well, lots of nice welcomes to our graduation ceremony this morning! Let me be among the first to welcome these graduates into their new world of daily toil and honest work! I'm deeply honored to have been asked to share a few thoughts with you today and I'm very much aware that I'm all that's standing between you and those coveted sheepskins. When I asked my wife Kay for advice on what to talk about today, she said and I quote, "ABOUT 5 MINUTES, then sit down!" Always good advice for a graduation speaker!

First, of course, congratulations to the graduates .....more thoughts to them in a moment. We should also recognize the parents and other family members and supporters.....the faculty and staff of this extraordinary university, who provide opportunities, resources and constant improvement challenges to meet the dynamic needs of students today. Grads, stand up and say "Thanks." My personal work and association with Chancellor Kulkarni, Dr. Peterson, Dr. Plante, Mr. Tom Arminio and my old friend Paul Thompson at the School of Public Affairs as they build its Homeland Security program, has revealed an endless commitment to excellence in a field of great consequence to our nation and great opportunity for interested graduates. Today's leaders AND today's graduates have a continuing obligation to be part of that new investment to keep educational excellence at the top of our national priorities.

[Now to the graduates]

I want to leave you with just two (2) ideas:

- 1) We have enormous problems facing our country.
- 2) INTEGRITY and HARD WORK WILL GET THEM SOLVED.

I remember well the days of my undergraduate work at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in the early 1960's. As a General Engineering student (our only choice, by the way!), I remember fondly the courses in Strength of Materials, Thermodynamics, Fluid Mechanics and Electronics. Did I say "FONDLY?!!" Wow! Time heals many wounds!!

In those days, we were marching to the moon and everyone was going to be an engineer. There was great enthusiasm for technical majors then and I often worry that such enthusiasm has waned. I for one consciously traded the world of numbers for the world of ideas at graduate school. But my life in public policy development and very real operational activity, has often been served well by the basic problem-solving skills developed in those tough math and engineering courses. The message to you....Pay the price to continue learning and you gain a lifetime of enhanced capability. Let me say that again....Pay the price to continue learning and you gain a lifetime of enhanced capability.

In these early decades of this new century...in these years we've come to call the post 9/11 world with its unique security challenges, in a world that seems to get smaller everyday with the advent of social media and a 24-hour news cycle, in a world with a global marketplace for both positive trading and potentially unspeakable threats, I believe there is value in stepping back from it all to recall those constants that will hopefully always be there to sustain us. And as I step back, I realize this new post 9/11 world both beckons to today's graduates and offers ever more complex problems to be solved.

So, again, ....what to say?! What would be of value to bright young minds thinking of almost anything but the speaker's words? What might be of value to their parents about to get a nice raise as tuitions come to an end? What of faculty members and town citizens who faithfully support this great institution? What timeless constants can we continue to count on? INTEGRITY, HARD WORK, BIG CHALLENGES.

In 1783, General George Washington met with his senior officers to hear their complaints about no pay, no provisions, no support from Congress, etc. He listened very carefully until each had had their say. Then he stood and while reaching into his tunic for spectacles said...."You will forgive me gentlemen, but not only have I gone gray, I have also become almost blind from these past years in the service of my country" ....In the service of my country – for Washington, six long years in the field – one visit for one night to Mount Vernon because it was on the way between New Jersey and Yorktown in 1781. Without a single pointed finger, the Commander in Chief of the Revolutionary Army of this new Republic, helped all in attendance at that tavern in Newburg, New York, understand that complaints such as they raised, however justified....were secondary to their oath. Commitment and worthy goals often require great sacrifice. Let me repeat that notion. Commitment and worthy goals often require great sacrifice....otherwise known as HARD WORK.

The standards by which you execute your life from here on out will determine your success, your satisfaction, your reputation and your reward. This complicated post 9/11 world demands that we know first what our anchors are. What do we believe in? What are our core values? What is worth dying for? The Founding Fathers provided us an early list....such things as popular sovereignty, the Rule of Law, the Separation of Church and State and a Market Economy. These ideas of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century have stood the test of over 200 years. They are

the constants we believe in as Americans. The key for us is to know how to contribute to their constant influence during our own time.

Colin Powell once said:...."Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible." When General Powell briefed President Reagan on his last day in office, he reported to the president that all was quiet in the world. There is something in history and public policy that I have come to call "the success of silence." It is the quiet freedom you and I enjoy every day because somebody else was working to head off an attack before it was ever launched. Or in the economic realm because someone stopped a bad policy that may have thrown you out of work or devalued your earnings. Many historians miss it, as do the day-today pundits, in part because these wonderful silences don't often last long. But when you are personally involved, any one of them can be perhaps the highest achievement you can attain in life. The silence may not bring everlasting fame, but it will bring everlasting gratitude and admiration from those who know how high the stakes really were. 9/11/01 was a very noisy day. The relative silence we've enjoyed at least at home since that day has not been accidental. Many public servants and citizens alike have worked hard to keep the silence.

So what does this "Successful Silence" notion mean to bright young graduates, hungry to make their mark? It's simple really. It's about contributing as a citizen. It's about understanding why Tom Brokaw thought so much of The Greatest Generation and then figuring out your version that fits your century.

There are many people who have helped us be quiet at home these past 10+ years.....starting with the hundreds of thousands of soldiers and sailors and airmen fighting against the radical Jihadists on the other side of the world. But here at home, I am extraordinarily proud to have been associated with Americans from both the public and private

sectors who knew the RIGHT thing to do and had the integrity and willingness to step up to the plate and help produce our current ten year long “Success of Silence.” Having watched carefully, I find they have two things in common...a willing and responsible work ethic and a constant quest to do the right thing. “Successful Silences” will be a constant, if sometimes fleeting, presence in your lives. How you create them and then how you use them must become your generational contribution.

So again, my message to you today. Very tough challenges ahead! Success will come with HARD WORK and INTEGRITY.

Let me give you an example of a very tough challenge your generation must handle. We hear daily about national debt and deficits. Here are the numbers:

U.S. Tax Revenue	- \$2.2T	}	Very scary numbers, but do we really understand them?
Federal Budget	- \$3.8T		
New Debt	- \$1.6T		
National Debt	- \$14.3T		
Recent Budget Cuts	-\$38.5T		

What if we take away 8 zeros and pretend it’s a family budget. The numbers become:

Annual Family Income	-\$22,000
Money the Family Spent	-\$38,000
New Credit Card Debt	-\$16,000
Balance on Credit Card	-\$143,000
Total Budget Cuts	-\$385

Now most families can relate – these numbers take this family down the drain – fast!

From the example we learn two things:

- 1) Simplifying things help us relate and understand
- 2) INTEGRITY AND HARDWORK will be required to solve a challenge this imposing

To close these remarks, I'd like to tell you a real life story. It is offered just to describe the burdens of leadership -- another euphemism for HARD WORK! It's a story about sailors and having been one most of my life, I am licensed to pass this on!

In 1914-15, the British explorer, Sir Ernest Shackleton, had a burning vision: to be the first to cross the continent of Antarctica and to reach the South Pole. Just one day's sail short of the continent, Shackleton's ship, the Endurance, became trapped in sea ice. Frozen fast for ten months, the ship was finally crushed. Its watertight integrity was gradually destroyed by ice pressure, and the 28 person crew was forced to abandon ship before it sank beneath the ice pack.

The journals of the crew recorded the death of the ship and described its last agonizing days groaning and lurching like a living creature in the clutches of the ice.

After camping with his crew for half a year, first on the ice and later on Elephant Island, Shackleton, together with 5 selected crewmen, made an open boat journey – a treacherous 800 mile ocean crossing to South Georgia Island – now considered one of the most daring survival journeys in history. He left the balance of his crew on Elephant Island with his promise to return to get them.

During that dangerous 2-week voyage in a 22-foot whaleboat with provisions to last barely a month, he and his small crew suffered from nearly constant gales, below freezing temperatures, and blinding snow

squalls. As he and his small party reached the Island of South Georgia, they were battered, nearly frozen, and weak from hunger and thirst.

Shakleton now faced the challenge of crossing the icy mountains of South Georgia Island on foot...which nobody had ever attempted before. The alternative was waiting until the following spring to finish the sea voyage to the other side of the island to find help.

Shackleton records his thoughts in his journal.

“Over on Elephant Island 22 men were waiting for relief that we alone could secure for them.” They crossed the mountain, found help, and from there mounted the successful rescue effort of every single man they had left behind.

Though he failed in his original mission to reach the POLE, Shackleton’s resolve....a combination of integrity and HARD WORK called LEADERSHIP.....brought his whole crew to safety from an almost certain death.

How easy it would have been for him to let thoughts of self-preservation and fears for his own safety divide him from his purpose. How easy it would have been for him to delay the already impaired journey, and to lose focus on the singleness of the mission which had become the survival of his crew? How do such men find the strength to do the right thing? It’s about personal and organizational integrity!

It seems to me that Ernest Shackleton is an extraordinary case study for all of us today. Work Ethic --- Integrity. The combination is very hard to beat. Join it. Do so consciously with focused study.

I know each of you has taken great advantage of your time at this university. We all who have gone before you now count on you to

continue the American dream. Go with the confidence of excellent preparation. Go with the intention to work hard. Go with the knowledge that integrity is without peer as a foundation in all you do.

When we read today's papers or listen to today's news, we must wonder sometimes, and be concerned about INTEGRITY. Whether we learn from extraordinary positive and lasting examples such as the passengers on United Flight 93 on 9/11/01, or the PENN STATE football program which sustained and enriched the lives of young men and fans alike for over 60 years or we learn from the negative examples of ENRON and ABRAMOFF or the current scandals surrounding the New Orleans Saints, what we learn is constant....INTEGRITY is soundness, wholeness and timeless. It imparts a unity of purpose for our lives. Each of us, you and I, must take that on together.

I am a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. For me, the Academy is a hallowed place...its buildings, its playing fields....memories of people who cared about me....who took the time to express interest in my success as a student, an athlete and later as a young Coast Guard officer. The Coast Guard Academy is my tabernacle. It's my library of ideas and challenges. It's my definition of integrity. It's also where I learned the value of HARD WORK.

This place, this PENN State Harrisburg University, will be one of those special places for you. Integrity is bred here. Take it with you and work hard. Success will surely follow.

Again, congratulations and God Speed.