

Introduction

I want to thank the alumni selection committee for this honor – I am surely humbled by the company you have placed me.

When I was in High school, I didn't have the honor to sit where you are sitting today, here at the academic awards banquet. My father died suddenly during my freshman year and it became a difficult time for my mother, my younger sister, Mimi and I just to get through each day. I had to work hard to overcome much adversity in order to become a successful adult. Even though times were tough, this community and this high school never gave up on us. There were people like high school guidance counselor Gail Demarest who saw my potential and became my strongest advocate, even when I thought I had zero options. You see, it was the good encouraging faculty and staff here at BRHS and the safe educational environment that they provided that made all the difference. My high school experience afforded me a unique optimism: that this world was one of endless possibilities. I am just one representative of the of bi-centennial class of 1976 that went out and accomplished great things. I offer my sincere thanks to my fellow classmate Rose Marie Lynch Foehr and my sister Mimi Mount Loretangeli (class of 1977) for working so hard to nominate me for this honor.

Principal Lynch gave me a difficult homework assignment, he asked me to share a summary of the wisdom I acquired to be a successful scientist. I'd like to share 5 key insights...

Insight 1 - Put God first in your life

Childhood summers spent on the family boat on the New Jersey shore were idyllic. There is nothing quite like sinking one's toes in the cool wet sand of Long Beach Island, or to gaze up at the Milky Way on a dark moonless night to teach a boy about the majesty of God's creation. To glorify God, I wanted to learn everything I could about the natural world. I thank God for enriching my life, for the gift of a beautiful and loving family and for setting me on the path that he chose for me long before I knew him as the Father.

Insight 2 - Live a moral and ethical life

Adopting and following an acceptable moral and ethical system to govern one actions is key - it is the foundation for all that will follow. David Meirs, (class of 1947 alumni hall of fame) was

an excellent role model. Not only was he a farmer but also a highly educated and well respected equine veterinarian. The values David taught me was the importance of morality and decency in all your endeavors. He impressed upon me the importance of being a free and independent thinker, to help one's fellow man, regardless of one's ability to pay , to disdain from self-promotion but most of all he shared his deep love and respect for the land.

Insight 3 - Work for the Greater Good

For me, this became a lifelong occupation as a scientist and as a teacher. The legacy that I leave behind is a few published scientific papers and patents but more importantly, are the students that I have taught and mentored whom will succeed me in science. These proteges number in the 10's out of the hundreds of undergraduate students that were taught. These people all were encouraged to ask a lot of questions, seek out honest answers. Don't be afraid to question authority.

Insight 4 - Become a leader and be persistent - no matter how long it takes

As a scientist, I can tell you from direct personal experience that everything in the knowable universe is connected. John Muir founder of the Sierra Club said it best, *When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it is hitched to everything else in the universe.* What this means is this: - A sustained focused effort by you can and will make significant and important positive contributions over the course of your lifetime,

There is only one other requirement for this sort of success: you have to choose it and then let it transcend you. At Clemson University, we call this "ALL IN". It only takes a "leap of faith" for you to make that first baby step to get started.

For me, there was a lot of trial and error before I found my true path. I failed many times before I finally succeeded, don't be afraid to test yourself, to take risks and most importantly have faith in God. You are going to do great!

Insight 5 - Live, laugh and love often.

Last Sunday a few of my dearest friends from high school , "the Low-riders" joined us for dinner at Mimi's and Tim's home There was much reminiscing and laughing about old times

and all kinds of advice concerning this very message. Those relationships are as solid now as when they formed over forty years ago. Family, Friendship, honor and doing the right thing is what defines one's life. It should continue to be your number one priority. Take time to smell the roses.

May God bless all of you and thank you for inviting me here today.