

Valedictory Address
St. Lawrence College, Kingston
June 1992
By P. Richard Moller

Thank you Mr. Principal. Mr. President, Members of the Board of Governors, St. Lawrence faculty and staff, honoured guests, fellow graduates.

When I found out that I was to give this address I felt honoured, but I must admit, it did seem to be a rather daunting task. That is why, at first, I approached it with the enthusiasm that I normally reserve for plagues or tax audits. Then I realized that I was being given a podium and a captive audience and all I had to do was talk. Those of you who know me will understand when I say that my only problem then was deciding how to keep it down to the few minutes allotted to me.

Well, we all finally made it. We're here knowing that we did get those last minute projects done. We survived the hectic studying for final tests and exams, and we can now look back with pride at our accomplishment. We feel a sense of gratitude to our instructors, friends and family for supporting us, but we know deep down, it was us, as individuals, that made the effort and accomplished the goal that we had set for ourselves.

Now that we are finished this educational segment of our lives we can look back and reflect on how we feel about it. You may, like Daniel J. Boorstin, think that "education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know." Or like Jack Miner when he said, "get all the education you can then add the learning." After reading through some of your text books you might have felt like Woody Allan when he made the statement, "I took a speed reading course and was able to read War and Peace in twenty minutes. It's about Russia." Or it might have given you the confidence of Archimedes when he wrote, "give me but one firm spot on which to stand, and I will move the earth." But no matter what you feel, we all learned that Oliver Herford was correct when he described an assignment as "something submitted in haste and returned at leisure."

We can now look forward to what the future holds in store for us. This year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of our college and the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of our country, the future might not, at first, look bright. Our college is straining under financial hardship, as are most of us, and the very existence of our country seems to be in question. You should, however, remember what Canadian Prime Minister Arthur Meighen told us in 1926, "Difficulties do not crush men, they make them."

Our college can look forward to the leadership of its new president; while our country can look forward to an even greater asset—US. *We* are the ones who can make a difference to Canada. We, as individuals, are the ones who will put Canada on the road to prosperity.

Yes, there are those who will sit back and say "but I'm only one person I can't make a difference." Do you think that Jacques Cartier said, "Hey, Me I'm only one person I can not make a difference?" Did William Lyon Mackenzie throw his wig in the air and say, "I'm only

one person I can't make a Difference?" Did Kingston's own Sir John A. MacDonald say "Ach, I'm only one person I can no make a difference?"

In their book on morals and morality Harold Titus and Morris Keeton wrote, "Each person capable of making...decisions is responsible for making their own decisions. The ultimate locus of...responsibility is in the individual." I would add: the ultimate locus of power and action is in the individual. We sit here today with the knowledge that if we set a goal for ourselves we can achieve it. We have already done it at least once!

But what are goals? Goals are our way of creating the future, in advance. They help us model our destiny, and shape our lives. Goals give us the power to grow and expand, and help us to develop our own success.

In 1953 Yale University did a study of its graduating class. One of the questions they asked the graduates was "do you have a clear, specific set of goals with a written plan for their achievement?" Less than three percent of them said that they did.

Twenty years later, in 1973, the researchers went and interviewed the surviving class members. They found those three percent to be happier, better adjusted and more excited about their life as a whole. They also found that those three percent were worth more financially than the other ninety-seven percent *combined*.

That is the power of goals. If used properly goals can orient us toward action and accomplishment. Our goals can give us the perspective that life is, or should be, an adventure, a story worth the telling, a contest as well as a collaboration. Why not make one of your many goals for the future: making Canada work.

Your education at St. Lawrence has taught you, not only what you didn't even know you didn't know, but what you want to set goals to learn in the future. You now have the education: it is up to you to add the learning. You have read the books, now it is time to apply their lessons. Your goals and aspirations are the firm spot on which you stand, and now *you* can move the earth! 2,500 years ago Aristotle taught that the purpose of education was not just to know, but to *act* in the light of knowledge. Lets not let Canada forget his lesson.

As a fashion designer I think I would be remiss if I did not give you some sort of fashion advice. So always remember that your expression is the most important thing that you can wear (except, of course, like your mother always told you, clean underwear just in case you're in an accident.)

Thank you.