

May 5, 2007 Commencement
College of Technology
President David L. Eisler
Ferris State University

One Last Lesson: Striving to Be the Best

As graduates you represent the collective hopes and dreams of our institution. Each of us at Ferris State University, faculty, staff, administration, and yes, fellow students, look to you as the result of our collective efforts. In some ways for me the emotions are those experienced as major crossroads that help define life - when someone is leaving home to set out on their own, at weddings, and at graduation. As a parent, friend, colleague, and yes, as teacher, you look at someone that you've tried to help guide, grow, and evolve and wonder if you've done enough, if there is some last piece of information or advice that you might give that might make a difference. Is there something that you've forgotten to say or do that will help.

My experience in those situations is that one looks into the eyes of that student and discovers that they've changed and that a relationship that has been defined as teacher and student has become one of friend or colleague. However I hope you'll forgive me if I share something I've entitled "One Last Lesson: Striving to Be the Best."

Each of you has enjoyed success as you have worked toward this day of achievement. Over the next few moments I'd like you to consider these successes while I share with you the college experience of one of your fellow graduates who I met recently.

On a campus visit this young man was fascinated by the plastics program and chose this as a major. During his first year he became involved with faculty member Tom Hollen and the Rube Goldberg competition. The object of this competition is to see how many steps can be used to do a simple task and to do so in 2 minutes time. The project that first year was to develop a voting system, for University it was "Name the Bulldog," and it placed second in the country. This year he and his student colleagues set out to win and to set a world record in the process. Together they invested over 3,000 hours of times developing, and building this year's Rube Goldberg entry, which squeezes orange juice and pours it in a pitcher, a project they themed around children's toys and named the toy factory. At this year's competition at Purdue University, their first attempt was a flawless execution of 345 steps, a world record, and they won the national competition. This is a wonderful example of teamwork, project based learning, and excellence.

Since that time, their efforts have been recognized with appearances on the Today Show and the Jimmy Kimmel Show. The device has been submitted as record to the Guinness Book of World Records.

This young man next begins masters work in plastics at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. I am honored to present this exceptional student to you, Matt Tomaszewski. I would ask that his parents and family stand and be recognized.

On behalf of our University I wish you great success, meaning and fulfillment. As each of you sets out on the next step on your life and career you will face times of challenge, heartbreak, and disappointment. In those times when you might consider giving up, I'd encourage you to remember the examples of Matt Tomaszewski, and his determination to be the best. His determination is an example to students here at Ferris State University

Congratulations and best wishes