

Doctor Mittleman, members of the administration and faculty, members of the alumni and alumnae, members of my beloved family, and friends; I am just thrilled that all of you could be here with me today. Welcome!

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Susan Oleszewski and her staff for making this day possible.

I wish to congratulate Doctors Carlo Pelino, Andrew Gurwood, and Marc Myers for conducting today's conference. Those attending can go home knowing their time was well spent.

I want to thank the generous benefactors and well-wishers for their support in dedicating a classroom in my honor.

Yesterday as I was thinking of a few remarks for today's dedication, I was drinking a Rolling Rock beer, while my grandchildren were playing an old tune on the piano over and over... "You made me what I am today, I hope you're satisfied."

It is said, "You cannot honor a man without reflecting upon the unequivocal support from his family, his teachers, and his friends."

Today I will give you my off the cuff remarks concerning this fact, along with a few memorable quotes which helped me face my rendezvous with destiny with determination and a smile.

To my family, I want to let you know I appreciate everything you have done for me. You had to support me through thick and thin, and I thank you.

To my beloved and beautiful wife, Helen, and my two children, Joseph and Therese, thank you for the two rules to live by:

"A place for everything, and everything in its place."

and

"Plan your work and work your plan."

If I kept these two rules, domestic tranquility was enjoyed at home.

To my grammar school teacher, Sister Mary Vincentine, I want to say, "Thanks!" She demanded you use your intelligence; she taught you to be industrious; and she fostered the attribute of integrity.

As I moved on to North Catholic High School, I met Father Thomas Walsh, better known as Knobby. He taught me that "knowledge is power, and be powerful." He also disproved the saying that nobody can make you do what you don't want to do. If you didn't want to be a good student, Knobby made you one. So I have to say "Thank you," to Father Walsh.

When I moved on to LaSalle College, I met Brother Christopher, whose message was, "Boys will be boys, but LaSalle boys will be gentleman." I tried as best as I could to be a gentleman at all times.

However, my study habits changed at LaSalle when I met Dr. John S. Penny. I was working with him in the biology department where I was scurrying about doing many, many things. He called me in one day and said, "Joseph, I notice that you are keeping busy, going here and there, but remember one thing: at LaSalle, we do not confuse activity with accomplishment." I must tell you that I had to redirect my work habits to satisfy Dr. Penny.

At the Pennsylvania State College of Optometry, I came to meet Dr. Albert Fitch, who was good enough to give me a scholarship to this hallowed institution. His motto was, "Optometry is a jewel in the crown of the health care specialties."

His son, Dr. Lawrence Fitch, later founded a new college building, the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, in Oak Lane, where he offered me a position on the faculty.

As a student at The College, I remember Dr. Nevyas called me to his office. He said, "Joe, there will always be a job for the man who knows how, but the man who knows why will be his boss." I tried as best I could, but could not master the "why" of organic chemistry!

Dr. Jack Neill lectured me on contact lenses, subnormal vision, and prism at the reading point. He taught so well that his knowledge was absorbed into my DNA.

Of course, there was Professor Gus Rybachok; God love him! He just opened your mind and poured in the knowledge, because you were scared to death!

As I moved on to Hahnemann Medical College, I had the pleasure of being taught by both Dr. Jack Weinstein, and Dr. Alex Pearce. They both taught me that “compassion is a verb, not a noun.” I used their advice throughout my professional career.

During my residency at Jefferson Medical College, I had the good fortune to be taught by Doctors Ed Keates and Austin Murray. They guided me with these words, “The persistent pursuit of excellence is the goal of patient care.”

I met Dr. John J. Siliquini after finishing my ophthalmology training, and I credit him with making me a “millimeter surgeon.”

I also want to thank my very many friends here in the auditorium. I appreciate everything you have done for me. You boosted my morale, and helped me financially during my training.

A special thank you to a great friend, the late Judge John Patrick Walsh. His words of wisdom to me were, “Joe, loyalty, loyalty, loyalty is an attribute every man should have. No matter where you are, or who you are, don’t forget home base.” Judge Walsh’s enthusiasm motivated Doctors Norman Wallis, Bill Manthei, Larry Gray, myself, and others to lobby for academic and legal changes to increase optometry’s scope of practice. The net result of which was the legal enhancement of the optometric profession nationally, and the founding of Salus University locally, under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Lewis and his staff.

I spoke to a trusted clerical friend, and asked him how long a speech should be. He looked me in the eye and said, “Joe, no souls are saved after five minutes.”

I got the hint.

In conclusion, I want to thank you; my family, my teachers and my friends, because, “you made me what I am today; I hope you’re satisfied.”

Because I am.