

Thank You Mr. Boofter,

Never Too Late

A Theory for Self Development

To God, in whose honor we must be thankful for all things; Dr. Beverly Byers-Pevitts, El Paso City Representative Melina Castro, Mr. James Boofter, Staff and Faculty, Fellow Graduates, Family, and Friends....

Speaking at this Park University Class of 2007

Commencement exercise is a great privilege.

Administrators and faculty, I speak for the entire class of three hundred and thirty graduates in saying...we are excited and hope you are glad to see us go! Our tuitions are paid up; we have received our final grades,

and now it is time to embark on the next journey in our lives. Reaching this milestone, for most of us, has been fraught with challenges...great experiences...., and expectations. Now we are ready to reap our rewards.

The degree if you please?

If you ask many of us: “Why did you choose to continue your education”? You are likely to hear a variety of answers, including:

-I married young and didn't go to college when I had the chance....or

-I joined the Armed Forces right out of High School with a plan to go later....

-I couldn't afford it

-I wasn't focused on school then....

-I had to work to support a family

And the reasons go on...

We all have very interesting and rewarding stories to tell. For me, it was a personal goal to finish what I started some 20 years ago. A Yiddish Proverb states: “We are judged by what we finish, not by what we start.”

My quest for continuing education started in 1999, after listening to a powerful commencement address given to a Park University Graduating Class by COL Bill Laramore. I immediately applied to Park. As is true for many of my colleagues; family, career, and relocation, caused me to get off to a slow start.

However, with support and encouragement from superiors, colleagues, family, and friends, I carried on and I know my mother and daddy in heaven are pleased.

At times, the pursuit of today’s dream seemed like an endless journey. But the demands of life did not

hold us back. Whether it was a demanding career, fulfilling a role as husband or wife, being a single parent, assisting our children with their homework when we had our own, celebrating births, coping with deaths, surviving divorce, relationships, accidents, and juggling deployments, and field exercises for those who are military. We often sacrificed family outings, concerts, church and civic events, vacations, and made other sacrifices as we studied, researched, wrote papers, developed briefing slides, braved the El Paso Floods of 2006, and met with people in our classes whom we weren't sure we wanted to meet with - to fulfill group assignments (but it usually meant new friends in the long run,and one more person to offer encouragement when you up felt like giving up).

Today, we also honor classmates who were not able to complete their educational goals, as they paid the ultimate price for our freedom. We recognize their sacrifice helped make possible our precious freedoms and pursuit of individual goals.

So now, for some of us– the goal is complete. Others will go on to pursue even higher educational goals. All of us will leave here knowing that achieving our own benchmark is possible. Winston Churchill once stated “Success is never final”.

In conclusion, we, the Park University graduating class of 2007, offer sincere thanks and gratitude to the staff and faculty at this great Institution. We are better equipped with the knowledge and skills required to compete in today’s competitive society. To our families, thank you for the love, prayers, encouragement,

patience, financial help and emotional support. I also encourage the children and young adults to think of school as not a chore; but rather, an opportunity to prepare for a successful career. Seek every educational opportunity available. And remember, it is “never too late” to embrace “a theory for self development”.

Thank you!