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Faculty Reflections

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Commencement 2011

Faculty Reflections

James E. House
Adjunct Professor of Chemistry
The 2011 Student Senate Professor of the Year

"DREAMS"

President Wilson, distinguished guests, and Class of 2011:

When I look across the space before me, my eyes behold a sea of green, but my heart beholds a field of dreams – dreams of medicine and science, dreams of art and music, dreams of education and public service. Today, each of you has reached a milestone on the path to your dream.

My dream led me from a one-room school long ago to stand before you here today. The teacher who taught and motivated me in my last five years in that school is 97 years old. When visiting with him recently, he told me that if he were to live his life over, he would again become a teacher. I would like to believe that such passion lives in my colleagues and me.

This day is not about us, but rather it is about you, the Class of 2011. However, I would be remiss if I did not tell you that our dreams could never be realized without your dreams becoming reality. There is little success in teaching unless students achieve their goals. My greatest joys have been when some of you have knocked on my door with great excitement to tell me about some phase of your dream that has come to pass.

As I have been privileged to know many of you throughout your time here, I have seen the growth that comes from hard work and commitment. Although some of you knew from the beginning where you wanted your dream to lead, others did not. This wonderful institution has been a vehicle by which you could explore and investigate. As a result, your dreams have become clearer. As a result of today, they are closer to being reality.

In the movie *On the Waterfront*, Marlon Brando gives the line, "I could have been somebody. I could have been a contender." He realized that his opportunity to become a boxing champion was gone. However, your opportunity is just beginning. Work on your dreams.

Throughout your life others will look to you as one who is able to heal in times of sickness, to give advice in times of adversity, to lead in times of uncertainty, or to provide vision when the way is unclear. Your path has led you to this university as part of the preparation, and I am privileged to have been a part of that for some of you. I am honored that so many of you have shared your dreams with me.

In the words made famous by Dr. Martin Luther King, I have a dream. My dream is that each of you experience joy in the days to come, success in the years ahead, and peace and harmony throughout your lifetime.

You have my best wishes and blessing on this extraordinary occasion.

Thank you.