

1994

**Winter Commencement Address, Darrell Cooper, December 18,  
1994**

Eastern Michigan University

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
DEC. 18, 1994  
MR. DARRELL COOPER

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MR. PRESIDENT

EMU BOARD OF REGENT MEMBERS

MEMBERS OF THE PLATFORM PARTY

CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION

FACULTY MEMBERS

PARENTS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

WHEN PRESIDENT SHELTON ASKED ME IF I WOULD SPEAK TO YOU TODAY...I  
TOLD HIM THAT I WAS NOT A VERY GOOD SPEAKER...HE REPLIED...I DIDN'T ASK  
IF YOU WERE A GOOD SPEAKER...I ASKED IF YOU WOULD SPEAK!

WELL THAT EXCHANGE EXPLAINS TWO THINGS. FIRST IT EXPLAINS HOW YOU  
GOT ME AS YOUR SPEAKER TODAY AND SECONDLY IT EXPLAINS IN PART THE  
SUBJECT THAT I WILL SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT TODAY.

THE WORLD DOESN'T CARE MUCH ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN  
NOT DO..THEY CARE ONLY THAT YOU DO WHAT IS ASKED OF YOU. YOUR BOSS  
WON'T CARE MUCH ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN'T DO WELL...HE OR  
SHE WILL EXPECT YOU TO DO WHAT IS ASKED OF YOU. YOUR SPOUSE WON'T  
CARE MUCH THAT YOU DON'T THINK THAT YOU ARE VERY GOOD AT WASHING  
THE DISHES, HE OR SHE WILL EXPECT YOU JUST GET THE JOB DONE.

THE WORLD NOT ONLY EXPECTS THAT YOU WILL DO WHAT IS ASKED OF YOU  
BUT IT WILL EXPECT THAT YOU DO IT NOW.

ABOUT THE ONLY PLACE LEFT IN THE WORLD WHERE PEOPLE STILL WAIT IN LINE FOR RESULTS IS IN THE SOVIET UNION.

THERE IS A STORY ABOUT A RUSSIAN WHO WENT TO A MOSCOW AUTO DEALER TO ORDER A NEW CAR AND WAS TOLD THAT IT WOULD BE READY ON DECEMBER 18, 1999. "WOULD THAT BE THE MORNING OR THE AFTERNOON"?, THE RUSSIAN ASKED. WELL THE DEALER STARTED TO LOSE HIS TEMPER.

"COMRADE, YOU ARE LUCKY TO BE GETTING A CAR AT ALL, AND ANYWAY, IT'S FIVE YEARS FROM NOW. WHAT POSSIBLE DIFFERENCE COULD IT MAKE, MORNING OR AFTERNOON"?

THE RUSSIAN REPLIED, "BECAUSE THE PLUMBER IS SCHEDULED TO COME IN THE MORNING".

SUCCESS CAN BE YOURS IF YOU ARE WILLING TO DO WHAT IS ASKED. SUCCESS WILL BE YOURS IF YOU DO MORE THAN OTHERS EXPECT.

THE CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION HERE TODAY ARE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE. THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED OR THEY WOULD NOT BE HERE. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE TO BE ASKED...HOW DID YOU DO IT.

AFTER ADDRESSING A HARVARD BUSINESS CLASS, SAM WALTON, CREATOR OF WAL-MART, WAS ASKED BY A STUDENT, "MR. WALTON, TELL US YOUR SECRET, HOW DID YOU REALLY BECOME SO RICH AND SUCCESSFUL"? SAM SAID, "I CAN ANSWER THAT IN TWO WORDS...GOOD DECISIONS".

STILL CURIOUS THE STUDENT ASKED, "HOW DID YOU COME TO MAKE ALL THOSE GOOD DECISIONS SIR". SAM THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT AND SAID, "I CAN ANSWER THAT IN ONE WORD...EXPERIENCE".

NOW FRUSTRATED THE STUDENT ASKED, "SIR, HOW DID YOU GET ALL OF YOUR EXPERIENCE"? SAM REFLECTED AND REPLIED AFTER A BRIEF PAUSE, "I CAN ANSWER THAT IN TWO WORDS, BAD DECISIONS".

NOW WHAT THAT STUDENT REALLY WANTED TO KNOW WAS HOW CAN I MAKE A LOT OF MONEY LIKE YOU SAM. THE FIRST THING THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW IS THAT MAKING MONEY AND SUCCESS IS NOT NECESSARY SYNONYMOUS.

MY FATHER WAS A SUCCESSFUL MAN, WITH LITTLE EDUCATION, WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF AN INFLUENTIAL FAMILY, WITH NO LEGACY, HE SUCCEEDED BEYOND HIS WILDEST DREAMS. HE HAD A NICE HOME, HE SENT HIS CHILDREN TO COLLEGE, HE GAVE THEM VALUES, HE HAD FRIENDS AND HE DID NOT WANT FOR ANYTHING IN LIFE THAT HE COULD NOT GET...BUT HE NEVER MADE NOR HAD MUCH MONEY.

JESUS CHRIST WAS A SUCCESSFUL MAN, HIS INFLUENCE AND HIS NAME HAS SPREAD WORLDWIDE AND CONTINUES 2000 YEARS AFTER HE LIVED, BUT HE NEVER HAD MATERIAL WEALTH AND HE WAS BURIED IN A BORROWED GRAVE.

ADOLF HITLER WAS A POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL MAN IN HIS TIME..BUT THANK GOD HE WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL.

I HOPE THAT SAM WALTON WAS TRYING TO SAY, "I ACHIEVED A BALANCE IN MY LIFE, A BALANCE OF SUCCESS, WEALTH, POWER, INFLUENCE, PRIDE AND RESPECT BY NOT BEING AFRAID TO MAKE DECISIONS, KNOWING THAT SOME OF HIS DECISIONS WOULD BE BAD AND HOPING THAT THE EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM THOSE BAD DECISIONS WOULD HELP HIM TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS. AS YOU GO FORWARD FROM THIS CEREMONY TODAY, I HOPE THAT YOU WILL STRIVE TO BE SUCCESSFUL FIRST AND WEALTHY SECOND AND I HOPE THAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE BOTH GOALS.

A WHILE AGO I ATTENDED A SEMINAR BY DR. STEPHEN COVEY, AUTHOR OF "7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE". IN THAT BOOK HE PROVIDES A PRETTY GOOD GUIDE TO SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS.

HE SUGGESTS THAT THE 4 BASIC NEEDS OF PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS ARE TO LIVE, TO LEARN, TO LOVE AND TO LEAVE A LEGACY.

TO LIVE: ENJOY LIFE...LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST, LIFE IS TOO SHORT, DO SOMETHING THAT YOU LIKE TO DO, LIKE WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU ARE DOING.

KATHLEEN NORRIS SAID: "LIFE IS EASIER TO TAKE THAN YOU THINK:

ALL THAT IS NECESSARY IS TO ACCEPT THE IMPOSSIBLE, DO WITHOUT THE INDISPENSABLE AND BEAR THE INTOLERABLE.

TO LEARN: YOU HAVE ALL DEMONSTRATED YOUR ABILITY TO LEARN, BUT FOR GOODNESS SAKE, DON'T STOP LEARNING NOW. YOU HAVE HAD JUST BEGAN.

LEARN TO BE A WINNER NOT A LOSER

A WINNER IS ALWAYS PART OF THE ANSWER.

A LOSER IS ALWAYS PART OF THE PROBLEM.

A WINNER ALWAYS HAS A PROGRAM.

A LOSER ALWAYS HAS AN EXCUSE.

A WINNER SAYS LET ME DO IT.

A LOSER SAYS IT'S NOT MY JOB.

A WINNER SEES AN ANSWER FOR EVERY PROBLEM.

A LOSER SEES A PROBLEM FOR EVERY ANSWER.

A WINNER SEES A GREEN NEAR EVERY SAND TRAP.

A LOSER SEES TWO OR THREE SAND TRAPS NEAR EVERY GREEN.

A WINNER SAYS IT MAY BE DIFFICULT, BUT IT'S POSSIBLE.

AND A LOSER SAYS THAT IT MAY BE POSSIBLE, BUT IT'S TOO DIFFICULT.

### **BE A WINNER**

TO LOVE: WITHOUT LOVE IN YOUR LIFE ALL OF YOUR ENDEAVORS AND SUCCESSES WILL HAVE NO MEANING.

AS ROBERT JAMES WALLER, AUTHOR OF BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY DEFINED LOVE...LOVE DANCES JUST BEYOND THE FIRELIGHT IN THE CORNER OF YOUR EYE. SHE DOES NOT LIKE YOU TO LOOK AT HER DIRECTLY; SHE FLEES FROM THE COLD LIGHT OF LOGIC AND DATA COLLECTION WHEN IT IS TURNED

TOWARD HER. IF YOU PERSIST IN STUDYING HER, HOWEVER, SHE FIRST DISINTEGRATES, THEN DISSOLVES INTO NOTHING AT ALL. IN A SENSE, LOVE IS PRACTICAL. IT FUELS YOUR LIFE AND PROPELS YOUR WORK WITH A SENSE OF VISION, A SENSE OF HOPE AND SENSE OF CARING. BECAUSE YOU ARE WORKING FOR OTHERS, NOT JUST YOURSELF, YOUR WORK TAKES ON A CERTAIN QUALITY THAT IT WILL NOT OTHERWISE HAVE. I SUPPOSE YOU CAN SAY LOVE PUTS MEAT ON THE TABLE, THOUGH AS I SAY THAT, I FEEL MORE THAN A SLIGHT DRAIN ON MY SYSTEM A LOVE PREPARES TO LEAVE. LOVE YOUR JOB, LOVE YOURSELF, LOVE YOUR WIFE OR HUSBAND, LOVE YOUR FAMILY, LOVE GOD, LOVE LIFE.

#### TO LEAVE A LEGACY

LEAVE SOMETHING GOOD BEHIND TO SHOW FOR YOUR LIFE. PUT SOMETHING BACK INTO THE SYSTEM THAT NOT ONLY HAS ALLOWED, BUT HAS HELPED YOU TO SUCCEED. I HOPE THAT YOU ALL REALIZE THAT THIS GREAT INSTITUTION, EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, EXISTS NOT SOLELY BECAUSE OF STATE FUNDING. IT EXISTS LARGELY DUE TO THE EFFORTS OF TIME, MONEY AND INFLUENCE OF MANY PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS OVER MANY MANY YEARS. IT IS UP TO EACH OF YOU INDIVIDUALLY TO DETERMINE HOW YOU MIGHT WANT TO LEAVE YOUR LEGACY...BUT I WOULD BE REMISS IN MY DUTIES AS CHAIRMAN OF THE EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION IF I DID NOT AT LEAST MENTION TO YOU THAT AS YOU GO OUT THERE AND SUCCEED AND MAKE LOTS

OF MONEY, DON'T FORGET GOOD OLD EMU. PUT SOMETHING BACK INTO THE UNIVERSITY THAT HELPED YOU TO SUCCEED.

REMEMBER... TO LIVE, TO LEARN, TO LOVE TO LEAVE A LEGACY.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SUCCESS CAN BE YOURS IF YOU CARE MORE THAN OTHERS THINK IS WISE, IF YOU RISK MORE THAN OTHERS THINK IS SAFE, IF YOU DREAM MORE THAN OTHERS THINK IS PRACTICAL AND IF YOU EXPECT MORE THAN OTHERS THINK IS POSSIBLE.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU A LIST OF 13 RULES FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION AS YOU LEAVE HERE AND TAKE ON THE WORLD. I DON'T KNOW WHERE I GOT THEM...THEY ARE NOT UNIQUELY MINE, BUT I HAVE COLLECTED THEM OVER THE YEARS. I HOPE THAT YOU CAN USE SOME OF THEM.

#### RULES

1. DON'T LOOK FOR PROBLEMS , THEY WILL FIND YOU. AND TAKE THEM ON ONE AT A TIME EVEN THOUGH THEY FREQUENTLY COME IN BUNCHES.
2. NEWCOMERS CAN EFFECT CHANGE ALOT EASIER THAN INCUMBENTS. AND YOU ONLY GET ONE SHOT AT BEING A NEWCOMER.
3. JOB SECURITY DOES NOT EXIST. DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE A DECISION. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE A CHANCE. DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL AND MOST IMPORTANTLY DON'T BE AFRAID TO SUCCEED.
4. TRUST YOUR WIFE OR HUSBAND AND IGNORE YOUR LAWYER.
5. DON'T LET ADVERSE FACTS STAND IN THE WAY OF A GOOD DECISION.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE IS NOT LACK OF STRENGTH NOR A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE, BUT RATHER A LACK OF WILL.

6. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS AND ACT. DON'T END UP IN A ROCKING CHAIR SAYING, "WELL I COULD HAVE"! ACT ON YOUR INSTINCTS AND IDEAS.
7. LOOK FORWARD, FORGET THE PAST. I THINK IT WAS WAYNE GRETSKY WHO SAID IT BEST, "SKATE TO WHERE THE PUCK IS GOING...NOT TO WHERE IT HAS BEEN"!
8. BE DECISIVE ABOUT YOUR GOALS AND CONVICTIONS FROM THE VERY START. DON'T WAVER, MOVE AHEAD. OBSTACLES ARE THOSE FRIGHTFUL THINGS THAT YOU SEE WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR MIND OFF YOUR GOALS AND CONVICTIONS.
9. EMBRACE NEW IDEAS AND CHANGES. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE A RISK. YOU CAN NOT DISCOVER NEW OCEANS UNLESS YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE SHORE.
10. KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR...DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY. DON'T LET YOUR PRIDE PREVENT YOU FROM ASKING A DUMB QUESTION... IT'S BETTER THAN MAKING A DUMB MISTAKE.
11. AS YOUR MOM ALWAYS TOLD YOU, "EAT YOUR VEGETABLES". IF YOU HAVE YOUR HEALTH YOU HAVE EVERYTHING. IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR HEALTH, YOU HAVE NOTHING.

12. BE HONEST AND HAVE INTEGRITY. I WOULD MUCH RATHER BE THE  
MAN WHO BOUGHT THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE THAN THE MAN WHO  
SOLD IT.

13. THIS ONE IS THE HARDEST, HAVE NO EGO.

WEBSTER DEFINES EGOISM AS SELFISHNESS, AND HE DEFINES AN EGOTIST  
AS ONE WHO TALKS. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT I AM FINISHED BEING AN  
EGOTIST FOR TODAY...I AM GOING TO STOP TALKING.

THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME BE WITH YOU THIS AFTERNOON.

I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT. THE KEY TO HAPPINESS IS  
HAVING DREAMS...THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS MAKING DREAMS COME TRUE. I  
HOPE THAT ALL OF YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.

GO WELL. THANK YOU AND GOOD AFTERNOON.