

A Few Simple Things

MICHAEL O'CONNOR

What an impressive sight! I'm gazing out at a sea of blue caps and gowns—striking evidence of your success as students at Brigham Young University.

I'm especially pleased to see Sharron Martin Kunz in your ranks. She started her degree forty-six years ago, interrupting her formal education to marry Calvin Kunz and raise four children. She always encouraged learning and helped support her family through eight degrees at BYU. Graduating from BYU is the fulfillment of a promise she made herself many decades ago. She has always loved Brigham Young University and what it stands for. She fostered the Spirit of the Y in her kids and loved watching them graduate from the university. She waited patiently, and now it's her turn. Well done, Sharron.

In Sharron's freshman year, 1966, President Ernest L. Wilkinson told the faculty that "our roots spring from Palmyra, rather than Cambridge. . . . If most institutions of higher learning aspire to be only communities of scholars, we are privileged to be also a congregation of disciples" (address to BYU faculty,

12 September 1966, 6). As graduates of BYU you are capable of competing with the absolute best in your fields of study.

Now that you have achieved this great accomplishment, some of you may think this is the end of your BYU experience. Yet this is only the first chapter. You will be an alumnus or alumna far longer than you were a student, and you will be forever considered part of the university. You will continue to make us proud.

When you were a student, we expected you to study, work hard, and develop into a person of faith, intellect, and good moral character. We invite you to continue to grow educationally and spiritually. We also expect a few additional things from you.

These things are somewhat simple. Wear Cougar Blue often, but especially on Fridays, which is our spirit day. You never know when someone is going to strike up a conversation

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with you because they recognize the Y logo on your shirt or the BYU pin in your lapel.

Don't be a stranger. Return to your alma mater often, whether it's for Homecoming or a football game, for classes during Campus Education Week, or to mentor students.

Stay involved with your college. Who knows? You may be the very person to help a student wondering what course in life he or she could take.

Whenever possible, become involved with BYU chapters. Continue to share the Spirit of the Y with a group that shares your ideals.

Many people helped you complete your journey here. As President Cecil O. Samuelson reminded us earlier, the Savior taught, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). I pray you will be grateful for this blessing. May the Savior's words inspire you to give back to

BYU, whether through the Annual Fund or replenishment grants or to help fund scholarships and research projects as a new group of students "enter to learn; go forth to serve." As I said, we expect great things from you.

BYU changed the very course of my life. And as I grow older, I appreciate its value more and more. And you will too, I am sure.

I want you to live "rise and shout," because today a lot of new Cougars are out!

I hereby confer on each of you lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association. We offer our congratulations and welcome you into this great association of more than 370,000. You will have many opportunities to join your fellow alumni in meaningful activities associated with the university.

I leave this with you, humbly, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.