

# New Milford High School Graduation

June 23, 2010

Good evening

Administrators and teachers, parents, families and friends, and esteemed graduates.

I am truly honored to be here with you tonight to celebrate your successes and accomplishments.

I was a bit nervous about giving this speech – wanting to get it just right.

So I asked everyone I knew what I should speak about . .

One young man I work with who graduated last year said enthusiastically –

“I have a suggestion”

So I said “really? What”

He said – “Don’t tell any dirty jokes.”

okay . . . .

then I asked him what the speaker at his graduation said –  
and he said

“I don’t know. We were in the back row telling dirty jokes”

One of my mentors from Cornell, Dr. Eric Trotter, a world renowned veterinary surgeon and speaker gave me the best advice –

He told me to speak from my heart.

so . . .

I am very proud to be from New Milford, and am proud to have attended New Milford High School. My education was second to none. The dedicated teachers valued student education as a LIFELONG PROCESS.

Certainly, what I learned at NMHS helped to shape me and strengthen my convictions. (although I didn’t know it a the time . . .)

- The Math Department taught me the importance of figuring out problems and the simple beauty of logic.
- The Science Department – the intrinsic wonder of anatomy and physiology and that much of life really is physics in action.
- The English Department – how worlds open up with words.
- And the Art Department – how to see beauty and balance. (I believe that is one of the reasons I chose surgery – a chance to use imagination and artistry with a scalpel.

I was fortunate – I knew what I loved and wanted to do early in life. I wanted to take care of animals. However, at that point in time there were very few female veterinaries

(<10%), and most of them were from farms. It was suggested by many that I go into human medicine. Problem was, my PASSION was for veterinary medicine.

## PASSION

You see it everyday, everywhere.

- Your parents, who are passionate about doing what is best for you.
- Teachers, who are passionate about education.
- At the World Cup, and at athletic fields where pick-up games are played - athletes passionate about their sport
- At an art exhibit, or a grammar school play.

There is so much ahead to be passionate about!

If you look back at those who have made the biggest impact on the world – and you – it is those who were passionate about what they do.

Passion fuels success – and is the arch-enemy of that ubiquitous thing we call STRESS. People change the world by following their passion – be it with their vocation – or avocation.

I am lucky – I get to live my passion everyday.

There is a saying –

“If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life.”

Find what you love.

Margaret Mead said –

“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

I would take that a step further and say never doubt that one person and one action can change the world.

One day I missed a family gathering – like so many missed – because I had an emergency surgery to do. This time I had missed my own surprise birthday party.

My mother, like all mothers, was concerned for my well-being.

She said

“You can’t save all the dogs”

and I said

“I know. But I saved that one.”

**\*\* YOU will change the world\*\***

- one patient at a time
- one student taught
- one kitchen cabinet crafted
- one book written
- one song sung
- one Leyland cypress planted
- one smile at a time

The world before you is not black and white – but that doesn't mean it is gray.

It is green and blue and yellow and red –  
Passionate red!  
and it is yours.  
and you will change it.

The path ahead is not straight. As you find and follow your yellow brick road amazing opportunities and experiences await you. Embrace them with passion.

Follow your heart  
Live with your heart on fire.  
Find your passion. Invent it.  
- and never stop learning -

Don't settle for good enough – because it never is.

In the words of perhaps one of the greatest orators of all time, Abraham Lincoln –  
“WHATEVER YOU ARE, BE A GOOD ONE”

Good evening, thank you, and heartfelt congratulations to a wonderful group of young men and women.

I wish you a life filled with passion.

Carol A. Carberry