

The Spirit of the Y

CARR KRUEGER

Like your parents—and probably like you when you are parents—our family has set certain standards in our home for ourselves and for our children. One relatively high standard in our home involves the privilege of driving. If our children meet certain criteria, they are allowed the use of their parent’s car. If the standard is not met, they know better than to bother asking. Do they complain? Absolutely. Do they have a hope of changing Dad’s mind? None!

Some time ago I was dropping off my then unlicensed 16-year-old son at an early morning Saturday football practice. Now, although my sons are wonderful, bright, capable boys, during their teen years they each developed the “grunt-only-if-required” and “only-if-it-produces-food” vocabulary common to their age group.

That Saturday morning this nondriving, slightly frustrated, monosyllabic son in the passenger seat came out of left field and nearly blew my mind with a singularly unexpected phrase. After I said my customary farewell of “Have a great day, Son!” Tyler, in an almost imperceptible voice, said, “I love you.”

So unexpected was this remark that for a moment I was utterly dumbfounded, and it left me completely speechless. My silence and surprise was visibly noticeable as Tyler seemed

to wait for a response. His expression of love, which had been infrequently heard, was burning inside of me as I replied, “Tyler, I love you too.”

The height of my euphoric surprise was only surpassed, however, by my son’s disbelief in his apparently hearing-impaired father as he retorted, “Eleven! Pick me up at eleven,” then walked away shaking his head.

I could hardly drive home as tears streamed down my face—not from sadness but from near-hysterical laughter: “Eleven.”

We have laughed about this many times since, and I have reflected on this experience frequently. Perhaps he had spoken unclearly, or perhaps I had heard what I wanted to hear, but clearly a mistake had been made in my understanding.

Today I hope to speak clearly so there is no mistake in your understanding.

There is a spirit on this campus that cannot be found anywhere else. We call it the Spirit of the Y.

Many of the defining experiences of my life were obtained here at BYU—on what I believe is hallowed ground:

Carr Krueger was president of the BYU Alumni Association when this commencement address was given on 21 April 2005.

- I solidified my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- I confirmed my desire to fulfill a mission.
- I was introduced to my sweetheart and eternal companion.
- I was educated with the basics of my occupation.
- I learned the importance of service to others.
- I felt the presence of the Holy Ghost—frequently.

These and thousands of other experiences taught me about the Spirit of the Y and created a stewardship responsibility that I hold today and that requires my consistent attention.

I owe a debt to this university greater than I have the capacity to repay. I would suggest that each of you, like me, has a greater debt today than you realize.

Let there be no mistake in understanding: as alumni, you are now the stewards of the Spirit of the Y.

In speaking of the Spirit of the Y at a devotional here at BYU just a few years ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley stated:

You might have gone to another school and received an excellent education. But you came here, and you were fortunate enough to be accepted. You came because you wanted the BYU experience, although perhaps you could not define it. ["The BYU Experience," BYU 1997–98 Speeches (Provo: BYU, 1998), 65]

In that same talk President Hinckley also said:

It has or will become a part of you. You are involved in it. . . . It should—it must—leave an everlasting impression upon you. . . . It should become an inseparable part of your very nature, something almost intangible but of great substance. . . .

. . . Having gained it, never lose it. Cultivate it in your lives and hold its very essence until you grow old and gray. ["The BYU Experience," 65]

You graduates today—and those graduates with us today from years past—have drunk deeply of the Spirit of the Y. But let there be no mistake in understanding: You are no longer recipients only; instead, you are now stewards of this university's reputation and its future prophesied success.

Make a commitment today to serve Brigham Young University, fulfilling your stewardship responsibilities and being keepers of the Spirit of the Y!

- Serve BYU by mentoring those who follow you.
- Serve BYU by donating your time and financial support every year.
- Serve BYU by never doing anything that would reflect poorly on its name.
- Serve BYU by being the employee/manager/owner/citizen who only acts with the highest integrity.
- Serve BYU by growing the testimony of the gospel that was nurtured here.

I congratulate you on your accomplishments to date.

As president of your alumni association, I hereby confer on each of you lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association and welcome you to this honored fraternity of more than 350,000.

I invite each of you to join me in service to this great university and to the students it produces. I pray that you will understand clearly BYU's divine mission and that you will faithfully accept your very personal responsibility to carry the Spirit of the Y into every corner of your life, safeguarding its reputation and sharing its light with all around you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.