

Let Your Voice Be Heard

CARR KRUEGER

What an incredible privilege it is for me to have attended BYU and to now serve both this university and its sponsoring organization. That said, I must acknowledge that being alumni president is not without its perks. One of those is being invited to sit in the president's loge during Homecoming games. (Although, frankly, at times during the last few years, that has been the only thing fun about those games.)

At one Homecoming game, running a bit late, my wife and I arrived just after the kickoff. People were still milling around, and, although still at some distance, we noticed that our seats were occupied. From my wife's angle above, she could only see that they were filled by an elderly couple.

Now, you need to understand that my wife would rather stand for three and a half hours than offend anyone. However, her passion for BYU football caused a serious internal conflict. So, being the thoughtful husband that I am, I stepped back to watch with amusement how this conflict would play out. She approached a female student usher to explain that an elderly couple were sitting in our seats and then asked, "What should we do?"

Seizing the opportunity to tease, and with feigned indignation, I added, "Would you please go tell them to move?"

A scowl raised on my wife's face just as quickly as the blood ran from the young student's. While looking past us at the elderly couple, only a few rows away, this young lady had clearly recognized who the "seat stealers" were and began to sputter and stammer, searching for words.

Unable to hold a straight face any longer, and fearing my wife's glare was going to burn a hole right through my head, I smiled and politely asked, "Would you have any other seats? We'd be happy to have President and Sister Hinckley stay right where they are."

Also attending that particular game was Elder L. Tom Perry, seated about a dozen chairs away and a few rows down. The game was going poorly, with BYU getting beaten badly. Approximately halfway through the third quarter, President Hinckley had seen enough,

Carr Krueger was president of the BYU Alumni Association when this commencement address was given on 11 August 2005.

and, raising his voice in order to be heard by Elder Perry, jokingly said, “Tom, you’re just not cheering loud enough.”

Replying the only way appropriate to such a comment, Elder Perry simply smiled and said, “I’ll do better, President.”

Today I ask each of you graduates, “Will your voice be heard when it is time to cheer on BYU?”

I’m not talking about a football game; rather, will your voice be heard when it is time to support BYU’s divine mission and objectives?

Like you, many of the defining experiences of my life were obtained here at BYU, on what I believe is hallowed ground:

- 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 me to “lift my voice.”

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. 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, 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.

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,” BYU 1997–98 Speeches (Provo: BYU, 1998), 65]

You graduates today—and those graduates with us today from years past—have drunk deeply of the Spirit of the Y. However, 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 “let your voice be heard.” Serve Brigham Young University, thereby 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 raising our voices on behalf of this great university

and the students it produces. I pray that your experiences will have taught you this university's divine mission and that you will faithfully accept your very personal respon-

sibility 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.