

# *This I Believe*

J. CRAIG McILROY

I am honored to represent the Brigham Young University Alumni Association today as its 90th president. I am humbled by the potential of those of you here today and the great opportunities that lie before you.

Fifty years ago, during a time in our history when Americans were living under the threat of atomic warfare and the possibility of Communist invasion, a journalist launched a radio series to bolster the confidence of all Americans.

The show featured individuals from diverse walks of life—some were completely unknown and others were quite renowned. Each week they shared their personal philosophies, the rules they lived by, and their basic values. Their messages served to strengthen hope, courage, and confidence in each individual's ability to make a difference. Listeners nationwide tuned in, and the broadcast helped many rediscover their confidence and a belief in their abilities to effect change in the world around them.

The journalist's name was Edward R. Murrow, a master communicator who had distinguished himself as a war correspondent overseas during World War II. His series was called, very simply, *This I Believe*.

It was important to believe in one's abilities then—it is equally important now. You, while here, have acquired tools to assist you whenever such troubles arise. And as you commence the next segment of your life as graduates of Brigham Young University, the character you have strengthened, the work ethic you have honed, and the discipline you have developed in an atmosphere of spirituality and scholarship will serve you well. You can believe in that.

Our Heavenly Father advises us to “be anxiously engaged in a good cause” and to “bring to pass much righteousness” of our own free will and choice (D&C 58:27). That charge takes us beyond the basics; it speaks of exceptional effort and achievement.

As our newest graduates, your lives are full of promise. I believe you are the hope of things to come in the sciences, the home, politics, technology, medicine, engineering, the arts, and society as a whole. There is no better time than today to catch—then realize—the vision of your possibilities.

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*J. Craig McIlroy was president of the BYU Alumni Association when this commencement address was given on 27 April 2006.*

Some of you, I understand, may be anxious for this ceremony to be over and to get on with the business of living and the fun that awaits you this evening. I would, in this moment, suggest that you be careful and thoughtful in your approach.

Professors, religious leaders, past students, and others fostered the remarkable environment you encountered when you first came to campus. I hope you added to it while you were here, and I anticipate all of you can enrich the BYU experience for others as alumni of this great institution.

As you leave campus this week, resolve to come back as often as you can. Look for ways to endorse BYU. Speak highly of your alma mater and give back to her with your time and your earthly means. Learn to be good stewards of the Spirit of the Y.

In speaking of the Spirit of the Y at a BYU devotional, President Gordon B. Hinckley stated:

*[The BYU experience] 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.*

*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. Having gained it, never lose it. Cultivate it in your lives and hold its very essence until you grow old and gray. [Gordon B. Hinckley, “The BYU*

*Experience” (4 November 1997), BYU 1997–98 Speeches (Provo: BYU, 1998), 65]*

We are so grateful for the generous level of resources made available to BYU from the Church. The work of the university moves forward on a schedule—the means provided by outside contributions allow the work to progress more rapidly still.

Last October President Samuelson received permission to move forward with the plans for a new building to be constructed where the existing alumni building stands today. The new building will be known as the Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni and Visitors Center. This campus gateway will enable visitors to feel the Spirit of the Y as it provides a home for you—our alumni—and offers a fitting tribute to our beloved prophet. We will break ground for that building later this summer.

The work of funding this project continues. Many of you as students have participated in this effort through the on-campus Choose to Give campaign. We thank you for your contributions and welcome your continued financial support of the university.

As president of your alumni association, I hereby confer on each of you lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association. Congratulations, and welcome to this great association of nearly 380,000.

As you have passed through the halls at BYU, I hope the Spirit of the Y has passed through each of you and become a part of you. May your every dream and worthy aspiration become reality, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.