

“Connected for Good”

DEE T. ALLSOP

What an awesome sight! What a remarkable collection of personal accomplishment your presence here today represents! What a memorable feeling! I thank the university for the privilege I have to be here to share it with you. For you and your families, this is clearly a high point of your lives.

Events of a few years ago helped me gain an appreciation for the high points of my life. My oldest daughter, her fiancé, and I decided to climb Mount Rainier. It was something I had thought about often as a young kid growing up in Washington State, where I could always see this snow-capped mountain at the end of the valley where my family lived.

Mount Rainier stands just over 14,400 feet. It is a serious climb that ascends nearly two vertical miles and, for someone like me, requires serious conditioning. After climbing all day on the first day, we arrived dead tired at Camp Muir, which lies at an elevation of 10,000 feet. We ate and then fell asleep. Our guide woke up us at one o'clock in the morning to begin the climb to the summit. From Camp Muir we headed out across the Cowlitz Glacier with our crampons strapped to our boots and each of us connected to the person in front of

us by rope just in case someone slipped on the steep, ice-covered glacier.

As we climbed, I became aware of how dependent we were on our guide to show us where to go to avoid the crevasses and other dangers and pitfalls. I was struck by the fact that every vertical step I took was into a foothold that someone who had gone before had carved out of the ice. We quickly fell into a routine of climbing for 50 minutes and resting for 10. The climb was amazing. It was a clear night with a full moon and a view of unspeakable beauty.

After a few hours of climbing, we reached our next rest stop at the top of what is ironically called Disappointment Cleaver. Our guide went to each climber and asked us this question: “Is this your high point?” His question struck me. I knew it was a nice way of asking if that was as high as I thought I could go. But I also remember feeling the distinct impression that as exciting and thrilling as the climb was, I could not count it as a high point

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in my life. That impression was validated just a few months later at the marriage of that same daughter. Surrounded by family and friends, appreciating what really matters in this life, I remember thinking and telling my daughter, “This is my high point.”

Today marks the beginning, or “commencement,” of what will be many high points in your life. I am grateful that my time here at Brigham Young University helped me understand the metric by which I could measure the high points in my life. It is the standard that is laid out in the mission of the university, which is “to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life” (*The Mission of Brigham Young University and The Aims of a BYU Education* [Provo: BYU, 1996], 1; emphasis added) and to help them become people “of faith, intellect, and character who have the skills and the desire to continue learning and to serve others throughout their lives” (*Mission and Aims* [Provo: BYU, 1996], 3).

That is a pretty high standard. As students of Brigham Young University today, you join a great alumni family of men and women now 370,000 strong throughout the world who share this mission—370,000 who have gone before you carving out footsteps to make your journey through life easier, 370,000 fellow alumni sharing a connection and a commitment to accomplish great things in life.

At the BYU Alumni Association, we believe that our ability to accomplish great things in life can be magnified when we connect with others who share the Spirit of the Y. We are dedicated to cultivate the Spirit of the Y by keeping you informed and connected to the good works that faculty and alumni are doing in the world and providing opportunities for you to learn, volunteer, contribute, and serve with the students, programs, and activities of your alma mater—keeping you “connected for good.”

We feel so strongly about this idea of being connected for good that we have adopted it as the slogan of the Alumni Association. No longer students, we will remain connected as alumni with a shared commitment to go forth to do good in a world that has now become our campus.

As president of the Brigham Young University Alumni Association Board of Directors, I hereby confer on each of you lifetime membership in the Brigham Young University Alumni Association. Congratulations!

I invite you to continue to let the mission of BYU guide you to the high points in your life. Let that mission continue to lift and inspire you. Find ways you can be “connected for good” and receive the blessings that come to those who continue to learn and serve others throughout their lives. May God bless you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.