

The Student Body and the President

DALLIN H. OAKS

Each year this annual President's assembly is one of my greatest challenges. I feel responsible to give something different each fall. Now, as I enter my fifth year, I have already spoken on most of our major concerns, and these talks have been disseminated widely in print and on television. I have spoken on various aspects of BYU standards, on the meaning of a University education, and on the blessing of commandments. This fall I have felt impressed to speak to you about yourselves and about myself, a kind of centennial review of the student body and the President.

During the year I often visit one of our campus cafeterias, take a tray, and enjoy my lunch with some surprised group of students. I find this is one of my best chances to find out what is on the minds of our students. One fall a few years ago I joined a table of freshman boys at the Cannon Center. Without introducing myself, I began to question the group about their experiences and view of BYU. Soon, one of the young men, apparently slightly irritated at this probing from a stranger, said, "Do you work here or something?" When I replied that I did, he asked a few questions of his own: "What do you do?" "I am the President," I replied. Ignoring his neighbor's jabbing elbow, he pressed on, "What're you president of?" I

explained and we all had a somewhat tight laugh together. Then he added this comment I will never forget. "Oh," he said, "I go to all of the assemblies and I see you there, but you are so far away I can't see your face."

When this freshman boy made that comment, I resolved that sometime I would try to help the student body see my face. That resolve was reinforced later when I told a student that my wife and children and I had done a lot of camping, and had in fact stayed overnight in our tent, sleeping on the ground in twenty-five different states of the union. He was incredulous. "Do you really do that?" he asked. "I can't imagine a President doing anything like that." Again I was reminded that the aura and distance of the office were so great that my family and I were not real persons to most. Even my children felt the distance. After they saw me sitting on the stand for one of my talks, one of my two oldest daughters said, "Daddy, you looked so cross and crabby. If we hadn't known you we would have thought you were angry." This reminded me that only my closest associates had heard me laugh or knew that

Dallin H. Oaks was president of Brigham Young University when this devotional address was given on 9 September 1975.

I have some good-natured fun even in the midst of some very stressful circumstances. I wanted to remedy this since I am a teacher and it is not wise for a teacher to be so distant from others that he is not a real person to them. It is important that you see my face, just as I try to see yours. I am only sorry that your numbers, more than twenty-five thousand, and the shortness of my time make it necessary for us to get acquainted in a highly public manner, before one another and a large television audience.

First, I will tell you something about yourselves, the students of BYU. Then I will tell you something of me. What I say about myself stands for thousands of others who have committed their lives to teaching or other service in the University. Each has an interesting story. Each has pursued a path of adversity, sacrifice, and accomplishment to bring him or her to this place. And remember that we are not so far removed from the challenges you are experiencing. In fact, most of us are so close that as we look into your faces each year we vicariously relive your confusion, your wonderment, and your pain. Our fondest hope is that you can benefit from our experiences, obtain a preparation superior to what we obtained, and go on to accomplishments far greater than ours. You must do this, for I am convinced that your challenges will be greater than ours. But in the end, the most important qualities about faculty and students are those we share: we are all spirit children of God, struggling to perfect ourselves, serve one another, and return to our Heavenly Father.

A Profile of the Student Body

First, a few facts about the student body: 52 percent of you are women; 48 percent are men. Despite this slight preponderance of women, there are six times more married men than married women, and as a result the single women at BYU outnumber the single men by a ratio of twelve to ten. Moreover, two out of three persons in the student body account for

two-thirds of the students. (I just threw that in to see if you were listening.) Don't laugh at this, men. Our women students get better grades, with grade-point averages that lead the men by a small margin in every class except the sophomores. We also have a large number of transfer students. Last year 30 percent of our undergraduate students and 52 percent of our graduates had transferred from another college or university.

About one-half of our BYU students are employed part-time to support themselves in the University, one-half of these, or about six thousand, being employed by the University. Because of the generous appropriations we receive from Church tithing revenues, more than two-thirds of the cost of your education at BYU is paid by the Church; your tuition covers less than one-third. Thus, every student admitted to BYU has, in effect, a scholarship of about \$1,400 per year. Our Board of Trustees is obviously interested in keeping the tuition low and creating as many jobs as possible to help our students work their way through college. That is evident in the fact that when you compare the amount we pay our student employees with the total amount we receive in student tuition, an amount equivalent to forty cents is paid out to the student workers of BYU for every dollar taken in as tuition and fees. Our student payroll is so large that the cost to increase the compensation of our student workers by five cents per hour is approximately \$200,000 a year. Thus, the raise of fifteen cents an hour we gave this year is equivalent to two-thirds of a million dollars or thirty dollars for each of our twenty-five thousand students.

One out of seven of our entering freshman last year was a convert to the Church, and half of these had been converted within the last three years. The proportion of our entering freshman who came from families with four or more children was 78 percent, and those who expected to have families of four or more

children themselves was 95 percent, materially higher than their parents' records.

Why did our freshman come to BYU? The four most important reasons they cited, in order of importance, were: the spiritual environment, associations with other Latter-day Saint people, the high academic standing of the institution, and the competence of the faculty. About a dozen other factors, such as low-cost tuition, work opportunities, parental wishes, and marriage opportunities, were also mentioned, but they trailed far behind the first four reasons.

The essential optimism of last year's freshmen is evident in the fact that 97 percent indicated that they expected to have a B average or better by the end of their freshman year. Ninety percent said they looked on college as a real opportunity for intellectual development.

But only 60 percent said they read any daily newspaper, including the *Daily Universe*, or any weekly news magazine. Seventy percent indicated that they rarely did serious reading aside from what they had to do in their course work and that they rarely questioned the accuracy of statements made in the textbooks and reference books. Over 40 percent indicated that they generally put off writing themes, reports, and term papers until the last minute. As we contemplate these responses of entering freshman, it is heartening to have this reaffirmation that there is still need for the teacher and the University.

Our survey of freshman men and women also gave some insights on the interesting subject of choosing a mate. In response to questions about the most important qualities they would seek in selecting a mate, the principal characteristics cited, in addition to the obvious ones of love and enjoyment of companionship, were membership and activity in the Church, maturity, character development, and a sense of humor. Physical appearance was practically at the bottom of the list. In fact, in terms of characteristics "very important" in the selection of a mate, sense of humor ranked six times

higher than physical appearance. So much for the accuracy of surveys! As for me, I was more impressed with the accuracy of the attitude reflect in an unsigned letter I received during the first week of school last fall from one of the Heritage Halls:

Dear President Oaks,

It has come to my attention that there are very few good looking men on this campus. I was under the impression that BYU was a HAPPY HUNTING GROUND for [women]. I feel that I was lured here with false information and I would like either a complete refund or a Tall, Dark, and Handsome MAN to report immediately if not sooner to [such and such] Hall. We will handle things from there.

We sincerely appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

[signed]

A DESPERATELY [sic] DISAPPOINTED [sic] MAN-HUNTER

That letter says it all. Its playful writer, pretending she came to BYU for romance, can't send her message without revealing that at least for the present she needs education more than matrimony.

Some Qualities of BYU Students

Again and again I have been impressed and humbled by the great personal qualities and desires of BYU students. Nowhere on earth could you find a group of young people who are your equal for faith, unselfishness, teachableness, knowledge of the gospel, and desire to do right. That last factor—desire to do right and the basic optimism it engenders—is probably the most apparent of all your virtues. After the author Alvin Toffler spoke on this campus two years ago he had lunch with Dr. Robert K. Thomas and expressed his astonishment and admiration at the faces he had seen at BYU. They were different than he had seen at any other campus on his nationwide tour. He

remarked on the absence of fear or discouragement and the fact that he had seen in your face a kind of “moral earnestness” that gave him hope for the nation. Similarly, the non-LDS editor and publisher of a major newspaper in California described seeing in the faces at BYU the generation he had envisioned for many years that would rise up and lead the country.

The same distinguishing virtues of BYU students appear in the description of a faculty member who came here after an experience at another university. He described how he had seen young people at the other university depressed at being involved in the drug scene and in other types of immoral and criminal behavior. Similarly, at BYU, where our students set such high standards for themselves, he had also seen young people depressed and discouraged with themselves, but the BYU students’ despair was because they had not been able to keep their resolution for regular early-morning jogging and scripture study.

We have high expectations of ourselves, and others share them. That makes us especially vulnerable to criticism, and how some love to criticize! It doesn’t always turn out as happily as the criticism one of our hosts received when a prominent visitor excused himself from his luncheon table to visit the men’s room on the third floor of the Wilkinson Center. When the visitor returned he said, “Well, I’ve discovered you Mormons are just like everyone else. When I go in a public restroom in some other location I usually find things written on the walls, and it’s the same way here in the Wilkinson Center.” Then, before our host could finish a lame apology, the guest admitted that he was only teasing. “It’s true there was something written on the wall in there,” he said, “but I have never seen that word on a restroom wall anyplace else.” “Well, what was it?” his host asked. “Just one word: Repent.”

And repent you do. Scores of letters come to my office from students who realize they have committed some wrong involving the

University and who desire to complete their repentance by making restitution and getting back on the road of growth and progress. For example, just two weeks ago I received the following letter:

President Oaks:

Please accept this \$30.00 in payment of a fire extinguisher that was taken from BYU lower campus two years ago. I am going on a mission and didn’t want this on my conscience for two years.

I have also received letters of regret and confession about cheating on examinations, plagiarism in submission papers, false certifications, and cheating or attempting to cheat on our dress and grooming standards. In every instance we try to help the individual make the matter right with himself or herself and any other persons who have been wronged. Although our policies must apply to general situations and large masses of people, we do try to focus our concerns on the individual, just as we know our Savior would do. No experience gives me greater personal pleasure than to see young men and women grow toward their stature as sons and daughters of God.

Along the rocky road of self-improvement most of us tend to get a little self-righteous, and the average BYU student probably has a slightly larger than average measure of self-righteousness. A *Daily Universe* cartoon a few years ago gave a deft criticism of this tendency. The cartoon showed a hippie, obviously not a member of the BYU community, standing in a campus location surrounded and almost covered by a pile of rocks and boulders, looking all bruised and beaten by the stoning. “All I said,” he explained to a bystander, “ was, ‘Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.’ ”

One of the most appreciated virtues of BYU students is the support they show and the appreciation they express for the ideals and standards of the University and for their teachers and administrators. As I have discussed

this characteristic with the presidents of other colleges and universities, they have been almost unwilling to believe that I am frequently stopped on campus by students who say, “President Oaks, what can we do to help BYU?” or “Tell me what I can do to help you as President.” I receive many letters of appreciation and support, and they mean more to me than I can tell you. I will quote only one example, which I select because its source and content are quite unexpected. It came from a young man who had just graduated from BYU:

Four years ago I came to Brigham Young University because I wanted to associate with people who humbly follow in the footsteps of the Savior. I found the sort of people I was looking for and experienced the four happiest years of my life. Even though I was not a member of the church and I did not join the church, I always felt welcome wherever I went and I feel greatly blessed that I have had the opportunity to personally experience the great power and beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ as lived by the LDS people. . . . I am very grateful to the many faithful members of the church and other benefactors of the university that have helped make my education possible. I shall always be proud that Brigham Young University is my alma mater. It is my sincere hope that many others will be blessed as I have been.

I even receive plates of cookies or cakes from time to time, usually with messages of love and support. Sometimes the offering is anonymous. While I do make a practice of reading anonymous letters, I admit to a certain big-city bias against sampling of anonymous cookies.

BYU students are also remarkable for their unselfishness and their willingness to serve. The work of the Student Development Association, which is raising money for our addition to the Harold B. Lee Library, is one example. Our students’ generous response to the SDA’s efforts is truly remarkable. Similar unselfishness is evident in the programs

carried on under the auspices of the student body office of Student Community Services, currently presided over by ASBYU vice-president Sylvia Law. Their projects include services to senior citizens and the Utah State Hospital, community beautification and conservation, and the “You’ve Got a Friend” program, where our students work on a one-on-one basis to help young students in the local school districts. Last year BYU students recorded over ten thousand service hours, making you the national leader in service hours for a university.

In fact, you have been so oriented toward service and so unselfish with your time that University and Church officials have sometimes had to encourage you to slow down and think more of your own needs for health, education, and self-support during this critical period. Although this caution is not needed for everyone, I would say to a few of you who need this counsel that you should use good judgment not to let your own wonderful impulses to serve others today use so much of your time that you do not obtain the education you need to give maximum service to your family, your Church, and your community in the future. Use good judgment. Remember King Benjamin’s caution, as he told his people to impart of their substance to the poor, and to visit and administer to the needs of the sick: “See that all these things are done in wisdom and order,” he said, “for it is not requisite that man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27).

About the President

And now, in the time that remains, I will tell you something about myself. My first intention is to help you to see that your teachers and other leaders have been through the same kinds of experiences that you find so difficult and discouraging. I also want you to see that we do not take ourselves too seriously. Institutions, like the Church and the University,

we take seriously, especially in a centennial year when we are enjoying so many dignified, ceremonial occasions. Once in a while we need to step out of our academic robes—literal or figurative—and enjoy a good laugh at ourselves. I propose to offer you a few, but first a little personal history.

My parents were both raised on Utah farms in very humble circumstances. My father rode a trapline in the predawn hours in all kinds of weather to earn money to attend BYU. Here he supported himself by cleaning out the stables at the National Guard armory. Borrowing money to attend medical school, he graduated, built a large practice in Idaho, and then died at age thirty-seven before he had ever been able to repay the entire debt for his medical education. He left a widow and three children, of which I was the eldest, age eight. Upset with my father's death and the later serious illness of my mother, I went through a difficult period in grade school when I was the dumbest boy in the room. I simply could not or would not do arithmetic, and my spelling was hopeless. I remember one occasion when some classmates threw rocks at me and called me stupid. I have the experience to sympathize with those who find schoolwork difficult. I also have a faith born of experience that failure or mediocrity need not be permanently disabling.

I also know something of the tensions of uncertainty. When I was a seventeen-year-old high school student in Provo I joined the Utah National Guard field artillery unit that had once included my father. I was corporal in that unit when the Korean War broke out, two weeks after I graduated from high school. Our field artillery group was alerted for active duty, and most of the units were soon called up and sent to training and on to Korea. When it came time to register at BYU in the fall I fully expected to be on my way to Korea before my first quarter was over, but after prayerful consideration I decided to register anyway since this would at least give me something to do

while I waited. In that atmosphere of uncertainty I began my college work. The tension and uncertainty continued for the succeeding four years, but so did I. My unit was never called, but the prospect was never far from my mind, especially since missionary work was sharply curtailed and persons immediately vulnerable to military orders, such as I, were not called.

I also know the feeling of uncertainty about selecting a major. Having come from a medical family, I assumed I should be a medical doctor. Fortunately, I took a typical preparatory premed course during the first quarter of my freshman year and recoiled in horror. The experience of cutting up a frog and dissecting the eye of a beef was sufficient to persuade me that medicine was not my chosen activity. I ricocheted into the language department, where I drifted through French, German, and Russian before admitting to myself that this was not for me either. Along the way I registered for a math series, with algebra in the fall quarter, trigonometry in the winter, and solid geometry in the spring. I got a B in algebra, a C in trigonometry, and then dropped the series at spring registration. I was obviously deficient in math, but I knew a trend when I saw one.

(I read an earlier draft of this talk out loud at our home evening last night to obtain suggestions from my wife and children. Just before doing so I had chided my fifteen-year-old son for being behind in his algebra class at Provo High. When I read that last passage about my own experience in the math series at BYU he muttered bitterly: "Then why pick on me?")

As you may have gathered, my initial studies at BYU were erratic. In fact, I did not perform at a consistently high level until June came into my life, and we were married after my sophomore year. I owe so much of my accomplishment to her. She knows this, and it is only appropriate that I acknowledge it to you. I finally selected a major, accounting, during the second quarter of my junior year, but

did not decide to try for law school until I was well into my senior year. I chose the University of Chicago because I was selected for a full-tuition scholarship and President Wilkinson said it was one of the best law schools in the country.

I have no difficulty identifying with students who need to work their way through school. During my entire BYU experience I worked thirty hours a week in a local radio station where I was an announcer and transmitter engineer. This excellent job, at which I worked all through high school as well as in college, paid me 75 cents an hour at the beginning and \$1.15 an hour before I graduated. It provided the means to support me and my growing family. I had worked part-time since I was twelve or thirteen. While my widowed mother had the education and the experience to earn a living for our family, I had always felt the responsibility to help out by supporting myself to the maximum degree possible.

When June and I married we began our family immediately, which temporarily terminated her education after the completion of her freshman year plus one quarter. When I graduated from BYU in the spring of 1954 we had two daughters. Both of these daughters graduated from BYU last year, both are now married, and our oldest daughter made us grandparents last fall.

Arriving at law school in Chicago with two little babies, we moved into a fifty-five-dollar-a-month apartment in a converted army barracks and proceeded to live a very meager but happy existence during the three years that followed. My scholarship paid my tuition, but all other living expenses were paid from my small earnings as an officer in an artillery battery in an Illinois National Guard and from borrowed funds. Like some of you, our parents had the means and the willingness to help us more than they did, but we wanted to make our own way. We rarely ate any kind of meat except liver and hot dogs, which we had no more than

several times a week, but on special occasions we did get some of the less expensive cuts of chicken or hamburger. Our three-room apartment was heated by an oil-fired space heater whose small attached tank had to be filled manually several times each day from storage drums out on the street. When our two daughters were ages two and three, the old one dipped her little cup down into the oil tank on the back of the heater, took a large drink of clear fuel oil, and then shared it generously with her younger sister. Bad results followed, and June had to rush them to the local hospital to have their stomachs pumped. Several weeks later the little girls climbed up into our medicine cabinet and seized a bottle of candy-flavored cough syrup that included some sedative drug. Cooperatively alternating their draws at the bottle, the two finished its contents, with predictable results. June grabbed one child under each arm and rushed for the hospital again. After their stomachs had been pumped, the nurse told June that would be ten dollars each. The total of twenty dollars would be a terrible drain on our funds, and June argued with the nurse, pointing out that the last time she brought the girls in to have their stomachs pumped she had been charged only five dollars each. The nurse made appropriate record of that fact, and within a week we were visited by a Chicago public health nurse, who made some very pointed inquiries about the storage of our harmful substances and our fitness as parents. In the meantime, one of my playful law school classmates was heard to tell a group that Dallin and June Oaks wouldn't drink anything but their daughters would drink everything.

My favorite play activity with the little girls was "daddy be a bear." When I came home from my studies for a few minutes at lunch and dinnertime, I would set my books on the table and drop down on all fours on the linoleum. Then, making the most terrible growls, I would crawl around the floor after

the children, who fled with screams, but always begged for more. "Daddy be a bear" was our favorite game. While I was in my third year of law school a prominent Milwaukee law firm invited June and me to come up at their expense to interview me for a job. As part of the process they had me interviewed by a psychologist, an unusual practice with law firms but standard with that one. As part of his examination this professional asked me to tell him what I saw in some weird ink-blot I had never seen before but which I now know to be a Rorschach test. In the first set of blots I saw nothing but two bears on their hind legs fighting. I couldn't see anything in the second one. The third was clearly a mother bear in the woods followed by a cub, and I so advised the interviewer. After two more blots that meant nothing to me I saw another familiar subject, a bear peering around a large bush. When I described that to the psychologist, he looked at me intently, put down his pencil, and said, "Now, Mr. Oaks, suppose you tell me about your thing about bears." So I told him about "daddy be a bear." He just shook his head, made some notations on a paper, and sent me back to the law firm. I must have passed the test because the firm raised the proposed starting salary by a thousand dollars per year when they received his report. Remember that if you have to take a Rorschach test in Milwaukee. I never did know what that fellow was driving at until I talked to another law student who took the same test. When he told me what he saw in those ink-blot I was shocked. Even if I'd seen that stuff I surely wouldn't have admitted it to a gentleman.

Our oldest son and third child was born toward the end of my senior year in law school. He is entering BYU as a freshman this fall. After graduating from law school, we lived in Virginia for a year while I served as a law clerk in the United States Supreme Court, and then returned to Chicago for thirteen more years. For the first three I practiced law with a

large law firm in Chicago, and during the next ten I was a professor in the law school at the University of Chicago, from which I had graduated. During this period two more children were added to our family, a son and a daughter, who are now in high school and junior high school here in Provo.

As soon as I had finished my education, June resumed hers, and the completion of her bachelor's degree was an important family project during most of our years in Chicago. She had supported me magnificently during my education, and I felt I an obligation and privilege to give support and cooperation in the completion of hers. I firmly believed that an education is just as important for a woman, married or single, as it is for a man. (I urge you to give careful consideration to a statement I will publish on that subject in the *Universe* later this week.)

During our first years in Chicago, June attended Roosevelt University, Wheaton College, and Elmhurst College. She also came out to BYU several summers to take courses in Summer School while I stayed in Chicago, though I joined the family briefly for the weeks permitted by my vacation. During these summers in Provo, June and the children lived in rented student apartments, including one summer in an apartment in Heritage Halls, where I also lived for a week during my vacation. She also took the maximum number of hours permitted through BYU Home Study, and the sight of her studying or at the typewriter in our home was a familiar one to all of us. A favorite experience that characterized this period was the time that our oldest son, then five or six years old, came up to his mother and showed her a shirt that was missing a button. "Mother," he asked sweetly, "will you sew on this button after you have graduated?" Finally, in 1965, fourteen years and five children after she had enrolled at BYU, June received her bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University. All of us consider that one of our family's finest

achievements. In the meantime, the boy learned how to sew on his own buttons, which will help him on his mission.

While June was still working on her degree, I began my first year of law teaching at Chicago. During this time a young man approached me after a class and complimented me warmly on the quality of my presentation. As I began to swell up just a little bit with his compliments, he quickly but unintentionally brought me back to size by concluding: "You're going to be a heck of a fine teacher . . . someday."

My opinion of myself as a teacher was also somewhat deflated by my youngest son. In the course of trying to teach a four- or five-year-old the principle of tithing, I described how as a young boy on the farm I had gathered every tenth egg to pay in tithing and how I had once driven the horses and a load of hay to the bishop's storehouse. After I finished with such illustrations, drawing liberally on my farm experience since I thought this would be most interesting and vivid to a little boy, I sought to test the effectiveness of my teachings by asking him a question. "If you were a farmer and had a harvest of crops and some livestock, what would you give to the bishop?" The little fellow thought carefully for a moment and then said: "I would give him a very old horse." I have thought of that childish reply many times as I have observed how supposedly mature individuals handle themselves in relation to the principle of tithing. Fortunately, I have had some additional years to work with my son on the subject.

Last spring an elderly resident of Provo took me down a peg. I had just attended the convocation of the College of Physical Education in the Provo Tabernacle and was rushing out of the Tabernacle to try to get to the Smith Fieldhouse for the convocation of the College of General Studies. My two daughters were graduating, and I wanted to be present for each of them. As I came running out of the

Tabernacle dressed in my academic costume, the robes flowing behind me with my agile wife and younger children running to keep up, an elderly man just coming out of the post office across the street stopped, hooked his thumbs in his trouser pockets, and watched the spectacle with a combination of amazement and indulgence. As I hurried past him toward the car he tried to make a friendly conversation with this question and comment: "Well, you finally made it, did you?"

Those of you who were on the campus last year have heard some opinions of the new Carillon Tower, pro and con. But did you know why it has taken us so long to complete this tower? The workers' language kept getting confounded.

A few Sundays ago we were walking around the campus on a Sunday afternoon showing the sights to some visiting friends from Chicago. As I showed them various buildings and new construction, they observed that many of the buildings were named after presidents of the University. "What are they going to name after you?" one of them asked. "Nothing, I hope," I replied, pointing out that in its second century BYU was likely to have more presidents than new buildings, and I thought it would be appropriate if I were to be the president who broke the tradition. As we engaged in this conversation, we were walking near the northwest corner of the Eyring Science Center where there is a great air vent. As we passed this vent my freshman son threw his arm around my shoulders and said, "Well, Dad, I think they'll name something for you." Then motioning toward this vent, he said, "Perhaps it could be the Dallin H. Oaks Memorial Hot Air Duct."

I have always had my best criticism from my own family. For the past ten years Professor Marvin S. Hill of the BYU History Department and I have been working on a book on the trial of the nine men who were indicted for the murder of Joseph Smith, which will be published in

the next few weeks. We tried very hard to make the book interesting rather than just scholarly, and I was very proud and sure we had succeeded. About a year ago, when we had what we thought was a final typed manuscript, I proudly presented the fat packet to my wife, June, and asked her to read it and give me her comments. I then went to Washington for several days on business. When I returned I asked her what she thought of the manuscript. She replied that she had only found time to read one chapter. I expressed my disappointment and chided her for not reading the book and helping me. Quick to leap to her mother's defense, our youngest daughter said, "Daddy, I know she was reading the book when you were gone because I came by and woke her up twice."

And now I would like to introduce you to the youngest member of our family, our sixth child, born on May 27, 1975. You might have read that the births at Utah Valley Hospital set a nationwide record last May for hospitals and communities of its size. The BYU community is surely responsible for most of that distinction, and June and I were proud to participate. We brought little Jenny June with us this morning, as you can see.

We have had a few expressions of astonishment from acquaintances who assumed we were a little older than we are, and June even made a few jokes herself. The other evening, she was explaining to friends that we had waited thirteen years for this special addition to our family, hoping all the while that we would have more children. "If we have to wait another thirteen years for the next one," she added, "I wonder if we can get maternity benefits on medicare?" But seriously, I assure you that this little girl is the greatest thing that has happened to us in the last four years. I firmly believe that the things of eternal significance, even during the period of our education, are not those the registrar records on the permanent transcript of credits in the University, but those the branch or ward clerk records on the

membership records of the Church, including baptisms, marriages in the temple of the Most High, and births of the children of God. I yield to none in my assessment of the importance of our achieving in our educational pursuits, but in the long run it is the growth, knowledge, and wisdom we achieve that enlarges our souls and prepares us for eternity, not the marks on our transcripts. The things of the Spirit are the things that are eternal, and our family relationships, sealed by the power of the priesthood, are the ultimate fruits of the Spirit.

I have shared this personal portion of my talk in order to help you understand that your teachers and your President are just other Latter-day Saints who are struggling and growing and trying to work out their own salvation, subject to all of the frustrations, difficulties, and joy of family and work. In conclusion, I want to thank you for the fact that the very sweet family life in the Oaks family is in large part due to the consideration of the student community at BYU. Although we live in the midst of this beehive of campus activity, with thousands of students passing our door daily, we are rarely interrupted in the choice family life we salvage from the moments we have together. If even one student in a thousand at BYU stopped by the President's home each year and stayed for one hour, that would cut out a significant portion of the uninterrupted time we have to spend as a family. When I first came I was fearful that this would be the case, but the great understanding and love of our students have intervened, and we live a relatively normal life in that home on the edge of the hill.

To those of you who are struggling to earn your way through the University, casting about for a suitable major area of study and making great sacrifices to pursue your life's goals, I can only say that you should have a measure of gratitude for these experiences. The strengths you develop by this means will be with you in the eternities to come. Feel no envy for those

whose financial or intellectual resources make it easy. The stuff of growth was never made of ease, and the persons who have it easy will need to experience their growth with other sacrifices, or forego the advancement that is the purpose of life. The law of life is properly described in the last two stanzas of the anonymous poem "Trees and Man":

*Good timber does not grow with ease.
The stronger winds, the tougher trees.
The further sky, the greater length.
The more the storm, the more the strength.
By sun and cold, by rain and snow,
In "trees or man" good timbers grow.*

*Where thickest stands the "Forest Growth,"
We find the "Patriarchs" of both,
Who hold a converse with the stars,
Whose broken branches show the stars
Of many winds and much of strife.
This is the common law of life.*

May God bless us to take advantage of our opportunities and adversities and to grow by them. I know that the gospel is true and that we are led by a prophet of God. I give you that assurance and also the assurance of my love and of the prayerful consideration of the officers and faculty and other workers of this University in all of our activities to serve you and our Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.