

Utah State University Commencement Address
The Very Reverend Frederick Quinney Lawson
May 5, 2007

Mr. president, members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, graduates, distinguished friends and family of Utah State University, good morning. I am deeply honored to have been asked by President Albrecht and the Board of Trustees to give this commencement address for 2007. I am even more honored that Utah State University will confer upon me an honorary doctorate. This is the highest tribute the university can give, and it is with the deepest respect that I accept this wonderful honor.

Before I begin, I would like to make an observation. I find it very interesting that our universities here in Utah have chosen commencement speakers that are somewhat in contrast to their general perceptions. BYU asked a political figure to address the commencement, and the U of U and USU both asked churchmen to speak. Perhaps the church-affiliated university felt it needed a bit more of the political, and the state schools needed a bit more of the religious understanding. That being as it may, I do want to say that I count it as an honor to be one of the speakers at this year's commencement ceremonies along with Vice President Cheney at BYU and President Monson at the University of Utah.

Many of your previous commencement speakers have had a relationship with this university and I, too, have a long and wonderful association with this university. When I first knew it, it was called the AC. As you may know, I am a member of the Eccles family, and both my mother's parents and grandparents came from Logan. My grandparents, Jess and Joe Quinney are also both alumni of this fine establishment, and today the College of Natural Resources bears their name. Besides that, many of my great aunts and uncles have also provided for the enrichment of this university in fields that they themselves loved and supported.

Two of my earliest childhood memories are very much associated with this university. I remember well one summer day that my grandmother, Jess Quinney took me in the car from our summer home at Bear Lake, and we came here to the campus for the dedication of the then "new" Edith Bowen School. Edith Bowen was a great family friend and a woman whose values and beliefs were important in shaping my early childhood. I delight in the fact that a few years ago we were able, through support from the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation, to dedicate a "new" Edith Bowen school.

The second memory is of a different nature. George Caine was married to my grandmother's sister, Marie. Uncle George was a wonderful man, and as many of you know, very influential in the development of modern dairy practices. We were visiting here in Logan, and Uncle George said he wanted to show me how to milk a cow. I was about five or six I think. He told me to lean down and watch how milking a cow was done by hand. It was at that point as he pulled on the cow, I got a full face full of warm milk. What a shock. I never quite recovered enough to be able to milk a cow.

Since those early days I have been on this campus many times for ground breakings, dedications and just visiting with friends who teach here. It is always a delight for me to be able to bring visitors from around the country and the world to USU and share with them a place dear to my heart.

In our church calendar, yesterday was the feast day in which we honored a woman by the name of Monica. I don't think that would mean much to most of you, but Monica was the mother of St. Augustine. Augustine was the bishop of Hippo in the 5th century and a very important person in the development of church understanding and theology. He has greatly influenced western thought and civilization over the centuries. But Augustine was not always such a devoted churchman. In fact it is said of him that he prayed, "Lord, make me holy, but not just yet!" However, it is Monica that I want to focus on for a moment. Monica never for a moment doubted the goodness of her son and was with him and supported him as only a mother can and often does both in thought, action and prayer. Her greatest happiness came when Augustine became converted and a churchman.

Several years ago, this university honored my mother with an honorary doctorate from the College of Natural Resources. In fact, there is a building that carries her name – The Janet Quinney Lawson Building – which serves both the College of Education and also the College of Natural Resources. It is fitting that in that building is married the work of the two colleges that have the names of her parents and also her Aunt Em Eccles Jones.

The reason I bring up Monica is that as she never stopped supporting her son. So too, I wonder if granting the degree of doctor to my mother Janet got her to continually support and uphold me, and that is why I am here today. I wouldn't dream to try and answer that question, but I am delighted to be following in the footsteps of my mother and grandparents in becoming an honorary alum of this university.

To you, the Graduate of the class of 2007, there is nothing honorary about your degrees. They come from years of hard work and have been well earned. Today, you reach a new stage and status in your life. And I am sure that each of you has the well-deserved admiration of your family, friends and teachers. I congratulate each of you heartily.

And now, having earned the degree, what comes next? No longer should you paraphrase St. Augustine and say: "Let me succeed and do well in a job, but not just yet." No, I hope that each of you is excited about the future and that you are eagerly looking to get on with the next stage of your life. The work you have done here and now completed needs to have a practical application. And it is how you accomplish that, which will make all the difference.

Each of you has been given the opportunity to gather the finest tools into your own possession. It is these tools that are now going to stand you in good stead. During your time here you have been more on the collecting side of the road. Now as you move from here, I would like to take a moment and ask you to consider something that I hope will make your future life have even a greater importance. May I suggest and even dare to ask

that each of you now practice good stewardship by sharing with others and the greater community something of what you received here. I suggest to you that there are three ways in which you can do this. You can share your time, you can share your talent and you can share your treasure.

Each of my fellow honorees today will understand what I am talking about. All of them have been students here at USU. Cecelia Foxley served in the past here at Utah State University and also to the whole state higher education system.

Young-Chul Hong carries the USU name wherever he goes. Throughout the world his name and his company is known. I am certain that he would agree with the statement that USU gave him the tools he needed in order to build the world class company, Kiswire, Ltd.

James Laub needs little introduction. His name and face is familiar to all in Cache Valley. As a former trustee of this university, he knows it well. His support has been invaluable, and he has given much to help make USU the fine university it is.

All of these honorees know and support this university, as I do. We have all shared our time, our talent and our treasure with USU.

Time is a precious commodity for all of us these days. If we do not take the time to share our understanding and learning with others, we risk becoming narrow and selfish people. By making time for others and sharing with them, we enrich them and we enrich ourselves too. Let us undertake to share our time more fully in the future.

Sharing of our talent can sometimes be a very daunting task. We are all gifted in many ways, but it is not easy always to share those gifts. But each of us has some special talent that we ought to put to use for the benefit of others, and so help them to grow and mature. An honest look at yourself will help you to discover your talents, and I hope that as you do this you will yourself, as you share your particular talents, grow more as you also receive the gift of sharing from others.

My final suggestion to you is that you share your treasure. Treasure is another word for money, as I am sure you all well know. Share your money? Share it with whom? Why do I have to share that? I have so little!

Each of you here today, graduates of Utah State University, have been the recipients of the treasure of past benefactors of this institution over the years. Their willingness to share what they had made makes it possible for you to benefit and gain a richer education because of what the treasure of others has helped provide. I cannot imagine but that each of you would want also to share your treasure so that those who come next will also have a chance to receive the same excellent education as you have received here at Utah State University.

This year Utah State University began a Capitol Fund Raising Campaign. President

Albrecht announced the first comprehensive campaign on March 2, 2007. The goal is to raise \$200 million by December 31, 2010. To date the university has raised nearly \$107 million. This is a wonderful opportunity for each of us to share something of our own gifts. Here are just three ideas; you can use your imagination and find many more I know. We can share time in helping to call former alumni and asking them to become a part of this event.

We can share talent by offering to give addresses and talks that support this university, or writing articles that will keep our goals in people's minds. We can share our treasure by each making a contribution to the campaign as individuals and at the same time encourage others to do so. If we all share in this adventure, we can turn dreams into reality, and in so doing help provide for a firm foundation for the future here at Utah State University.

Graduates of 2007, I have said nothing in this address about individual courses, football touchdowns, and strangely for a priest, nothing about religion. Not that these are unimportant, unrelated to scholastic existence. But the fact remains, Utah State University is not a factory for facts, nor is it a gym for overweight students and teachers; it is not even a chapel where faith is fortified. I do assume however you have amassed facts, lost fat and grown in your individual faith. I hope you will leave here learned, slender believers, believers in education and what it can do for you.

But more to the point, you will leave here "educated" to the extent that a university, guided by all that is good, has opened you to looking and loving life in a more profound and deeper manner. You will leave here "educated" in the measure that Utah State University has revealed to you a world that excites and delights you to seek the more profound truths that exist.

My friends, with all the joy and gladness I can wish for you today, I hope that this wonderful university will always be a focus of attention in your life, and that you will continue to work for it and support it over the years. I offer each of you my congratulations on achieving your degree today, and hope that your future will be blessed with all good things.

Thank you for your attention.