

Toronto, April 11, 1950

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Message to the 1950 Graduating Class

With a strange feeling of regret, I address this message to the graduating class of 1950, for it means the time has come to bid a reluctant farewell to Ryerson's first students.

It is said that the first born in a family always holds a special place in the affections of the parents, despite the fact that he has been subjected to much experimentation on the part of his devoted, but sometimes exasperated, mother and father. While attending this institution, you too have been the subject of an experiment but one of an educational nature and evolved only after much careful thought and planning. I have no hesitation in stating that the members of the staff feel that, judging by the calibre of our first graduates, this educational experiment is producing the type of young men and women who, in the years to come, will not only bring credit to themselves and their country but to the institution that has awarded them their diplomas. The class of 1950, therefore, in its own right as well as being our firstborn, will always hold an honoured niche in our hall of fame.

The months have passed quickly since your first days at Ryerson when you were, in truth, "strangers in a strange land". You possessed, however, the spirit of the true pioneer. You were willing to stake your future on an untried and practically unknown educational institution, firm in the belief that it offered the type of instruction that would prepare you for the career of your dreams. What an inspiring challenge that was to the faculty! And what efforts were put forth to ensure that you would not be disappointed.

The past two years have been packed with a vibrant determination on your part to place Ryerson at the forefront of all institutions of its kind in Canada. Your unbounded enthusiasm has been the stimulus needed to develop the kind of resourceful student body that takes an active interest in the many

extra-curricular activities on the campus. You will always recall with pleasure the elections for the students' administrative councils and the wise leadership of those councils; the rugby, hockey and basketball teams that have done so much to establish a reputation for our colours; The Ryersonian and its small brother, The Little Daily, and the able work of its editorial and news staffs; the press banquets when prizes were awarded for the best stories of the year; the athletic banquets and the awarding of letters to deserving athletes; the various parties throughout the winter months; the 1949 initiations when a comparatively small group of sophomores tried to initiate a freshman class twice its numbers; the field day, with its celebrated chariot race; the Christmas parties; the "Blue and Gold" At-Home; RIOT, 1950, and the discovery of what fun it was to participate in a stunt and watch others forget their inhibitions and do likewise; the opening of the Students' Union; the programmes on Radio Station CJRT-FM.

Will you ever forget the thrill of turning the dial on your radio and hearing the now familiar announcement, "This is CJRT-FM, Education's own station. To-night the Ryerson choir presents a programme of choral music from historic Ryerson Hall situated in the heart of downtown Toronto". Possibly the announcer will say, "The Ryerson band is to give a concert for the next fifteen minutes," or the script may read, "The cast of the play you are about to hear is composed of students attending The Ryerson Institute of Technology". All these organizations have done much to assist in the development of a full student life at Ryerson.

But now you are putting all these things behind you. They become a background of pleasant memories as you sally forth to make your mark in the world and achieve success. That is a fascinating word, "success" - full of romance, excitement, position and power. It sounds so triumphant that some people try

to obtain it by dishonest means. True success, however, cannot be measured by one's wealth or position or accomplishments. Happiness comes from within and has little relevance to the number of stocks and bonds in a safety deposit box. It is closely akin to the satisfaction you obtain from doing your job to the best of your ability and from the relationships you have with those who are your friends and associates.

How do you achieve this thing called "success"? First of all, you must make up your mind what you want to do or become. Then you must do your level best to achieve that goal. And the way to start is right at the bottom of the ladder, never neglecting in any way the tasks that may appear to be menial or trivial. As a matter of fact, the spirit you display in performing these minor assignments may determine whether or not you are placed in line for promotion. It has been emphasized many times that there is no substitute for hard, effective work. Always remember that the only honourable promotion is one that is earned.

But on the way up and even when you have reached the top of your ladder, you will be surprised to discover that you must learn how to live with your successes. By that, I mean you must hold an abiding respect for your job and never neglect it in any sense of the word. On the other hand, you must not let it dominate you to the exclusion of other interests. You and your job must become partners on a basis somewhat similar to a happy marriage. The mere possession of skills and knowledges and the accumulation of more skills and knowledges does not alone ensure advancement or even guarantee that one will hold one's job. Success is compounded of so many elements -- native ability, training, determination, perseverance, initiative, self-discipline, personality -- that you must try to develop all of them. A pleasing, obliging manner may mean the difference between success or failure. In his book "Elements of Human Engineering",

Mr. C. R. Gow states, "In a recent survey of over four thousand cases, it was found that 62% of the employees discharged were unsatisfactory because of social unadaptability, only 38% for technical incompetence.

Look well, therefore, that you do not forget the importance of all those principles that point the way to the highest and best things of life. Many years ago, Alfred Lord Tennyson propounded a philosophy that has never been successfully challenged -

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control
These three alone lead life to sovereign power".

And so to you, our first graduates, we bid a fond adieu. We hope that what you have learned in these halls and corridors has even exceeded your expectations for one of the main objectives of this Institute is to share with our students our knowledge and ideas. We trust that the diploma you have received will be a hall-mark to signify to everyone that you have been thoroughly prepared to step on the first rung of life's ladder. You leave secure in the knowledge that your careers will be followed with eager anticipation by your former teachers. We have but one wish for you -- that you will achieve true success along life's difficult road and that in accomplishing your ambition, you will bring honour to yourselves and your alma mater.