

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI—ST. LOUIS
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS - SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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MAY 17, 2015

THANK YOU FOR THAT INTRODUCTION. I AM HONORED TO RECEIVE THIS HONORARY DEGREE IN EDUCATION AND TO BE THE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI—ST. LOUIS, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.

GRADUATES, I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE WORKED VERY HARD TO GET TO THIS POINT AND FOR THAT YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD. AT BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP WE LIKE TO SAY THAT “IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A BEAR” AND THE SAME IS TRUE FOR YOU. IT HAS TAKEN THE SUPPORT OF ALL OF YOUR FAMILIES, YOUR FRIENDS, AND YOUR PROFESSORS TO HELP YOU GET TO THIS POINT AND I WOULD LIKE TO SAY TO ALL OF YOU—CONGRATULATIONS.

ONE OF THE MANY SKILLS THAT YOU HAVE ACQUIRED WHILE AT UMSL IS THE ABILITY TO BALANCE MANY THINGS AT ONCE – SCHOOL, WORK, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY. THAT MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT DEGREE OF ALL— MASTER OF MULTI-TASKING. I HAVE YET TO MEET A SUCCESSFUL PERSON WHO COULD NOT MANAGE MANY THINGS AT ONCE. THIS IS THE ONE SKILL THAT WILL FOR SURE SERVE YOU WELL THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE AND YOUR CAREER.

THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL MOMENT FOR ME. THANKS TO ALL OF MY TEACHERS, I STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY, A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR AND COMMUNITY CITIZEN. I ACCEPT THIS HONORARY DEGREE IN HONOR OF ALL MY TEACHERS—THE ONES I LOVED AND THE ONES I WAS NOT SO FOND OF—THEY ALL CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO MY SUCCESS, TAUGHT ME ABOUT LIFE AND LEADERSHIP AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TO BE PASSIONATE ABOUT MY WORK.

TEACHERS ARE MY HEROES. ALL OF THEM IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER FUELED MY CREATIVE SOUL. EDUCATING CHILDREN TO BE SUCCESSFUL ADULTS IS NOT AN OVERNIGHT PROCESS—THE RESULTS OF A TEACHERS LABORS ARE NOT ALWAYS SEEN IMMEDIATELY, OFTEN NOT EVEN BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR. AND WHILE A TEST RESULT CAN SHOW PROGRESS IT IS NOT THE MEASURE OF ANYTHING

CLOSE TO WHAT A TEACHER IMPACTS IN A YEAR. I HAVE DONE MY BEST TO REACH BACK TO ALL MY TEACHERS AND SAY THANK YOU.

YOU HAVE SELECTED WITHOUT A DOUBT THE HARDEST CAREERS ON THE PLANET— BEING A TEACHER IN THE U.S. I AM HERE TO THANK YOU IN ADVANCE AND IN THE SHORT TIME I HAVE WITH YOU I THOUGHT I WOULD SHARE A FEW STORIES WITH YOU FROM MY TEACHERS THAT WILL ENCOURAGE YOU TO GO AT YOUR NEW CAREER WITH GUSTO—TO BE THE BEST TEACHER POSSIBLE BECAUSE IT DOES MATTER—I AM LIVING, BREATHING PROOF.

WHILE I KNOW MUCH HAS CHANGED IN OUR COUNTRY SINCE I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE, IT IS SINCE THAT GRADUATION THAT THE LESSONS LEARNED IN MY K-16 YEARS HAVE ACTUALLY SUNK IN. AS EACH OF YOU EMBARK ON YOUR EDUCATION CAREERS YOU WILL BE INFLUENCING THE FUTURE MAXINE CLARKS OF THE WORLD WHO WILL BE BUSINESS LEADERS, ENGINEERS, DOCTORS AND TEACHERS IN 2040 AND BEYOND. IT SOUNDS LIKE IT IS SO FAR AWAY BUT IT GOES BY IN A BLINK. YOU ARE TAKING ON THE MOST NOBLE WORK IN A TIME WHEN OUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU TO BE THE ABSOLUTE BEST YOU CAN BE—DEFY THE STATUS QUO AND TEACH KIDS TO BE LIFELONG LEARNERS NOT JUST MOMENTARY EXPERT TEST TAKERS.

JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, I VISITED MY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN MIAMI FLA. I WAS ASKED TO SPEAK TO 5TH GRADE STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS AT THE INDUCTION OF THE NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY. AS I WAS PREPARING TO SPEAK TO THE CHILDREN, SO MUCH MORE ACCOMPLISHED THAN I WAS AT 10, I WONDERED WHETHER I WOULD HAVE BEEN ADMITTED TO THIS VERY SPECIAL GROUP OF SCHOLARS? I STOOD ON THE STAGE OF THE CAFETERIA AND AS I LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE ROOM IN THE EXACT SAME CAFETERIA I ATE IN EVERY DAY FOR 6 YEARS, I BLINKED AND I SAW MY FRIENDS AND MYSELF AS WE WALKED THROUGH THE LINE, WHERE WE SAT AND WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT.

THAT WAS 60 YEARS AGO—AND YES, THIS WAS THE SAME CAFETERIA, THE SAME BUILDING THE SAME PE FIELD BUT THANKFULLY, HAD CHANGED. NOT THE BUILDINGS. THEY WERE ALL STILL THERE, WITH MAYBE A FEW MORE ADDED BECAUSE NOW OVER 800 CHILDREN ATTEND THIS VERY SPECIAL PUBLIC SCHOOL. I VISITED EVERY CLASSROOM THAT I WAS TAUGHT IN AND AS I MOVED FROM FAMILIAR CLASS TO FAMILIAR CLASS AS IF I HAD NEVER LEFT, I REALIZED IT IS NOT BUILDINGS THAT TEACH KIDS, TEACHERS DO AND THAT IS WHAT HAD CHANGED.

THE TEACHERS WERE SMARTER, GUIDED BY DATA, THEY WERE MORE DIVERSE. CHILDREN IN THIS SCHOOL PICK A LANGUAGE TRACK –SPANISH, FRENCH, GERMAN OR MANDARIN AND ARE TAUGHT 100% IN THIS LANGUAGE BY NATIVE SPEAKERS, BY TEACHERS OF ALL ETHNICITIES. THEY WERE TAUGHT BY MORE SPECIALISTS, THE SCIENCE TEACHERS TEACH DISCOVERY THRU LABS AND ROBOTICS. ONE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHERS WRITES CHILDRENS BOOKS.

I WAS VISITING WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, DR. LEYTE-VIDAL, WHEN YOUNG ALBERTO RAN IN THE OFFICE TO HUG HER TO TELL HER HOW MUCH HE LOVED SCHOOL. HE DID NOT EVER WANT TO LEAVE SUNSET ELEMENTARY. THAT WAS ME— THANKS TO MY TEACHERS, I TOO LOVED SCHOOL BUT I DON'T RECALL EVER HUGGING MY TEACHERS QUITE SO EMPHATICALLY.

THE MID 1950'S AND 60'S WHEN I ATTENDED SUNSET ELEMENTARY WAS AN IMPORTANT TIME IN OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WERE AFOOT THAT WOULD OPEN MY EYES AND COMMIT ME TO A LIFETIME OF ENGAGEMENT IN CIVIL RIGHTS. IT WAS MY TEACHERS, EVEN THE ONES I DIDN'T LIKE SO MUCH WHO ENCOURAGED ME TO BE ALL THAT I COULD BE-- TO TAKE RISKS, TO DIG DEEP FOR UNDERSTANDING, IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT CHANGE IT AND MOST IMPORTANT TO FIND MY PASSION.

IT IS MRS. GRACE, MY FIRST GRADE TEACHER WHO TAUGHT ME TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR. SHE MAY NEVER HAVE USED THAT TITLE—I AM NOT SURE IF WAS EVEN IN WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY AT THAT TIME, BUT SHE TAUGHT US TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, TAKE RISKS, AND BE PERISTANT.

EVERY FRIDAY AT ABOUT 2:15 JUST BEFORE WE WERE FINISHING UP OUR DAY AND OUR WEEK SHE WOULD GO TO HER PENCIL SHARPENER—THE ONE ON THE WALL THAT WHEN SHE SHARPENED IT MADE A CRUNCHY SOUND. SHE WOULD TAKE A PENCIL JUST LIKE THIS—THE ONE SHE USED TO GRADE OUR PAPERS THAT WEEK AND SHARPEN IT REALLY SHARP. TO A 6 YEAR OLD A SHARP PENCIL WAS SYMBOL OF RESPONSIBILITY—WE KNEW IT COULD HURT SOMEONE IF WE WEREN'T CAREFUL SO IT WAS A SIGN SHE TRUSTED US. THE CEREMONY WOULD BEGIN—MRS GRACE WOULD GIVE HER PENCIL, THE VERY ONE SHE USED ALL WEEK AS A REWARD. NOT TO THE STUDENT WHO WAS THE SMARTEST, NOR THE BEST BEHAVED OR THE ONE WITH PEREFCT ATTENDENCE. NO, THE PENCIL WENT TO THE STUDENT WHO MADE THE MOST MISTAKES THAT WEEK.

YOU CAN BE SURE THAT A 6 YEAR OLD WANTS TO BE RIGHT MORE THAN THEY WANTED THE PENCIL BUT SHE KEPT US PARTICIPATING AND ENGAGED AND TRYING—SHE TAUGHT US TO TAKE RISKS. THE STATUS SYMBOL IN OUR CLASS WAS HOW MANY RED PENCILS YOU HAD IN YOUR DESK!

IT WAS NEARLY TWENTY YEARS LATER WHEN I REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT THIS LESSON WAS. AS A NEW EXECUTIVE IN RETAIL MY FIRST DAY ON THE JOB IN 1972 THE FLOOR MANAGER HANDED ME A RED PENCIL JUST LIKE THE ONE MY TEACHER GAVE ME MORE TIMES THAN I CAN RECALL. I ASKED WHAT IT WAS FOR AND SHE TOLD ME THE BUYER HAD MADE A LOT OF MISTAKES AND SO WE HAD A MISTAKE BUDGET—WE WOULD MARK THE ITEMS DOWN AND THEY WOULD SELL BETTER. THE LIGHT BULB WENT OFF FOR ME. FORTUNATELY, MOST OF THE THINGS MY TEACHERS TAUGHT ME DIDN'T TAKE 20 YEARS TO HAVE IMPACT.

MRS.ADAMS WAS MY H.S. JOURNALISM TEACHER AND SHE TOO TAUGHT ME TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX, DIG DEEP FOR UNDERSTANDING AND SHARE THE FACTS. AS EDITOR OF MY H.S. NEWSPAPER, MRS. A. ALLOWED ME TO USE HER CAR TO SELL ADVERTISING OR PICK UP PROOFS. ONE DAY I WALKED INTO THE TEACHERS LOUNGE TO RETURN HER CAR KEYS WHEN I OVERHEARD THE TEACHERS TALKING. I WAS AFTERALL, A JOURNALIST—I HAD A NOSE FOR NEWS. THE TEACHERS WERE COMMISERATING OVER THE FACT THAT THE JANITORS IN OUR SCHOOL MADE MORE MONEY THAN THE TEACHERS. I WAS ASTOUNDED BY THIS.

WHEN I LATER ASKED MRS ADAMS ABOUT THIS SHE TOLD ME TO DO MY RESEARCH AND FIND OUT THE FACTS FOR MYSELF. IT WAS 1966—NO GOOGLE, SO I DID IT THE OLD FASHIONED WAY, THE LIBRARY, THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF THE MIAMI HERALD AND EVEN A TRIP TO TALLAHASSEE TO STATE DESE HEADQUARTERS. IT WAS TRUE AND I WROTE AN EDITORIAL FOR OUR SCHOOL PAPER THAT MADE ME NOT SO POPULAR WITH THE JANITORS BUT VERY POPULAR WITH THE TEACHERS. MS. ADAMS DID ME ANOTHER FAVOR—SHE SUBMITTED MY EDITORIAL TO THE COLUMBIA SCHOLASTIC PRESS ASSOCIATION THAT RESULTED IN ME WINNING A SIGNIFICANT SCHOLARSHIP TO COLLEGE.

WHEN BUILD A BEAR WORKSHOP WENT PUBLIC, I WANTED TO RECONNECT WITH MRS A. AND PAY HER BACK FOR WHAT SHE HAD DONE FOR ME BUT I HAD NO IDEA HOW TO FIND HER –WAS SHE MISS ADAMS OR MRS ADAMS? SHE HAD LONG RETIRED FROM TEACHING SO I HIRED A PRIVATE DETECTIVE. HE ASKED ME HOW OLD SHE WAS. I WAS 17 WHEN I WAS HER STUDENT SO I THOUGHT SHE MUST HAVE BEEN 35 AT LEAST.

WHEN WE WERE RE-UNITED IT WAS CLEAR SHE WAS NOT 17 YEARS OLDER. WHEN I ASKED HER POINT BLANK SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS 6 YEARS OLDER AND I WAS HER STUDENT IN HER SECOND YEAR OF TEACHING.

MR. ROSINEK WAS MY H.S. GOVERNMENT TEACHER. HE TAUGHT US THE POWER OF THE VOTE. IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT VOTE IT OUT OR VOTE SOMEONE IN WHO CAN CHANGE IT. OR BETTER YET, BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE— I HAVE NEVER MISSED VOTING IN ANY ELECTION THANKS TO THAT AMAZING LESSON.

PERHAPS THE MOST PRESCIENT WORDS CAME FROM MY COLLEGE MARKETING PROFESSOR, DR. ROBERT CARTER WHO DECLARED ON MY LAST DAY OF CLASSES AS A SENIOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA—“*MAXINE, YOU ARE DRIVEN TO BE SUCCESSFUL. I SEE THAT IN YOU EVERY DAY. YOU MUST DO WHAT YOU LOVE, NOT WHAT OTHERS EXPECT OF YOU BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO LOVE WHAT YOU DO— THEN YOU WILL LIVE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL LIFE.*” LIKE MANY COLLEGE SENIORS OUT TO SAVE THE WORLD IN 1971, I SHOOK MY HEAD, WHAT DID HE KNOW?—HE WAS A COLLEGE PROFESSOR. FORTUNATELY FOR ME, IF DIDN'T TAKE THAT LONG TO FIGURE OUT HOW RIGHT HE WAS.

LIKE YOU, I HAVE ALSO BEEN ON A SIMILAR ROAD TO SELF DISCOVERY AND FULFILLMENT.....GETTING AN ADVANCED DEGREE OF SORTS. I AM ONE OF THE FORTUNATE FEW WHO KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANTED TO DO SINCE I WAS 11 OR 12 YEARS OLD—WORK! MAKE MONEY! BE INDEPENDENT AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE. NEITHER OF MY PARENTS HAD A COLLEGE EDUCATION. IN FACT, I WAS THE FIRST OF MY FAMILY TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE. THAT WAS 1971—AMAZING TIMES FOR CHANGE FOR OUR COUNTRY AND PARTICULARLY FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN.

AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA I INTENDED TO GO TO LAW SCHOOL BUT IN ORDER TO PAY FOR THAT OPPORTUNITY I HAD TO GET A JOB. I JOINED THE TRAINING PROGRAM AT THE MAY DEPARTMENT STORES IN WASHINGTON, DC. DURING MY FIRST FEW MONTHS AS A TRAINEE I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF HEARING THE THEN MAY CEO, STANLEY GOODMAN, SPEAK TO A GROUP OF ASPIRING EXECUTIVES. I REMEMBER THAT DAY AS IF IT WAS YESTERDAY AND AS IF HE WAS SPEAKING TO ME ALONE. STANLEY WAS TRULY A RENAISSANCE MAN—HE WAS A WISE BUSINESS MAN, MUSICIAN, ART COLLECTOR AND PHILANTHROPIST. HE ALWAYS SPOKE WITH PASSION AND FLAIR. HE SAID THAT DAY (AND MANY TIMES THERE AFTER)

“RETAILING IS ENTERTAINMENT AND THE STORE IS A STAGE AND WHEN THE CUSTOMER HAS FUN THEY SPEND MORE MONEY.”

THAT VERY DAY THOSE WORDS CHANGED MY CAREER GOALS AND MY LIFE JOURNEY. STANLEY HELPED ME SEE MY WORK IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT AND WITH A MUCH MORE JOYOUS PURPOSE. I WAS NO LONGER A SPORTSWEAR BUYER-- MY JOB WAS TO CREATE FUN. WHAT I WAS SELLING WAS NOT THE LATEST FASHION BUT THE SUIT THAT WOULD HELP LAND THAT IMPORTANT JOB. THAT DAY I BEGAN TO PUT MY HEART AS WELL AS MY BRAIN INTO EVERY BUSINESS DECISION I MADE. THROUGHOUT MY CAREER I CAN SAY THAT I WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL WHEN I WAS HAVING FUN AND CREATING FUN RETAIL EXPERIENCES FOR OTHERS. IN ESSENCE, CONNECTING AND ENGAGING WITH MY CUSTOMERS.

UP UNTIL THIS POINT IN MY WORK LIFE I THOUGHT THAT REAL WORK WAS DOING MY JOB AND ALL THAT THAT ENTAILED TO GET AHEAD, BUT WHAT I FOUND OUT IS THAT THE REAL WORK IS IN FINDING OUT WHAT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE. ONE OF MY STRENGTHS IS I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW AND I HAVE NEVER BEEN AFRAID TO ADMIT THAT AND FIND THE ANSWERS TO THE MANY UNKNOWN. IN THIS CASE, I KNEW THAT I WAS A CREATIVE PERSON AND HAD ALWAYS BEEN SUCCESSFUL WHEN I COULD USE MY CREATIVE TALENTS PROPERLY. I BRIEFLY THOUGHT OF EXPLORING ANOTHER CAREER—LAW OR TEACHING OR MAYBE PSYCHOLOGY BUT I LOVED THE RETAIL BUSINESS—IT WAS MY PASSION. BUT I FELT THAT THE FUN HAD GONE OUT OF IT. I COULD PUT IT BACK. I COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

THE DAY I WALKED AWAY FROM MY JOB AS PRESIDENT OF THE THEN \$2.3 BILLION PAYLESS SHOESOURCE I HAD NO IDEA WHAT BUSINESS I WOULD BUY AND RECREATE OR WHAT TYPE OF BUSINESS I WOULD START FROM SCRATCH BUT I KNEW IT WOULD INVOLVE KIDS AND THE CHILD THAT WAS BEGGING TO COME OUT OF ME AGAIN.

SO I WENT TO THE BEST SOURCE – KIDS. WHO BETTER TO TELL ME WHAT WAS MISSING THAN THE AUDIENCE I WANTED TO ATTRACT? I SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS IMMERSSED IN GETTING MY KID PH.D. I SPENT TIME WITH MY FRIEND’S KIDS AT THEIR SCHOOLS, BASEBALL GAMES AND AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD MOST OF THE TIME JUST LISTENING AND OBSERVING. BEING 4’ 10” I WAS ACCEPTED PRETTY EASILY!

ON A SIMPLE SHOPPING TRIP IN 1996 FOR THE NEWEST BEANIE BABIES, MY FRIEND KATIE WHO WAS 10 YEARS OLD AT THE TIME SUGGESTED THAT BEANIE BABIES WERE SO SIMPLE, MAYBE WE COULD MAKE THEM. SHE MEANT GO HOME TO MY BASEMENT CRAFT ROOM AND WE COULD MAKE THEM FROM SCRATCH—MAKE A PATTERN-CUT IT OUT- SEW IT TOGETHER -BUT I HEARD SOMETHING DIFFERENT AND SAW A TOTALLY DIFFERENT POSSIBILITY. THAT DAY THE IDEA FOR BUILD-A-BEAR WORKSHOP WAS BORN. 9 MONTHS LATER WE OPENED OUR FIRST STORE AT THE ST.LOUIS GALLERIA AND TODAY, 18 YEARS LATER, WE HAVE OVER 400 STORES AROUND THE WORLD, WE HAVE SOLD OVER 140 MILLION STUFFED ANIMALS, HAD CUMULATIVE SALES OF OVER \$5 BILLION AND GIVEN OVER \$35 MILLION TO CHARITABLE CAUSES OUR GUESTS CARE ABOUT. WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT POSSIBLE FROM A BEANIE BABIE SHOPPING TRIP WITH A 10 YEAR OLD? YES, CHILDREN ARE TEACHERS TOO—BE SURE TO LISTEN FOR WHAT THEY CAN TEACH YOU. TAKE IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS.

IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO BE OBSERVERS AND TO SEE HOW THINGS COULD BE DIFFERENT. MANY A WATER COOLER CONVERSATION IS HELD WITH THAT IN MIND...BUT THAT’S ALL IT IS—JUST CONVERSATION. PEOPLE CAN ALL TALK ABOUT HOW IT CAN BE DIFFERENT OR SHOULD BE DIFFERENT BUT IT IS A VERY SMALL GROUP THAT TAKES IT UPON THEMSELVES TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. BE A PART OF THAT SMALL GROUP— THOSE THAT WANT TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION AND NOT THE PROBLEM--TO TEACH AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS.

I KNOW THIS IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE. WHAT YOU LEARNED IN THESE HALLOWED HALLS OF EDUCATION IS NOT JUST FOR YEAR 1 OR 2 OF TEACHING, BUT TO GUIDE YOU IN YEAR 5 AND 10 AND 20.

AS TEACHERS IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER YOU WERE ONCE KIDS TOO. REMEMBER WHEN YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO ALWAYS KNOW “WHY CAN’T WE DO THIS, MOMMY” OR “WHO SAID THIS WON’T WORK, DAD?” OR JUST SIMPLY “WHY?” THAT IS THE KID-LIKE POSSIBILITY I AM TALKING ABOUT VS. THE “IT WILL NEVER CHANGE” PHILOSOPHY SPOUTED AT THE WATER COOLER. BY THE WAY, KATIE IS NOW 28 AND WORKING IN A YOUNG START-UP IN SAN FRANCISCO.

YOU WILL SOON HAVE THE DREAMS OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF CHILDREN IN YOUR HANDS. DON’T TEACH THEM TO THE TEST, TEACH THEM HOW TO LIVE UP TO LIFE’S TESTS—ALLOW THEIR DREAMS TO UNFOLD IN YOUR CLASSROOMS OF POSSIBILITY AND CREATIVITY WHERE CURIOSITY THRIVES.

I HAVE A QUOTE IN MY HOME THAT I READ EVERY DAY: “IF YOU CAN LIVE YOUR IMAGINATION, THEN YOUR LIFE WILL BE A DREAM COME TRUE.” THANKS TO MY TEACHERS MY LIFE HAS FAR EXCEEDED MY DREAMS. I WISH ALL OF YOU A LIFE FULL OF DREAMS COME TRUE. YOU ARE WELL ON YOUR WAY!

CONGRATULATIONS!!