

Remarks by Ferd Prevost, Keene State College Class of 1956 - Honorary Doctor of Science Degree Recipient

Interim President Kahn, dais guests, 2013 Keene State graduates, ladies and gentlemen.

My thanks to Doctor Kahn and the Keene State College community for this distinct honor. The folks at “Life is Good” have a motto: *Like What You Do, Do What You Like*. I have had the privilege of living that guideline for many years. What a blessing.

When I entered Keene Teachers College, KTC, in the fall of 1953 –// 60 years ago, when the total enrollment of the college was less than the number of today’s graduates – Dean Dwight Carle, called the boys to Parker Hall and pointed to the two guidelines painted on the walls, intended to guide us for the next four years and beyond. First: *If you do this, you can’t do that* (an early warning about the problems with multi-tasking) and on the opposite wall, the well-known charge: *Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve*. That first guide did not anticipate smart phones, twitter, and face book, // technology most likely in use as I speak. However, the second is certainly related to the new tag line: *Wisdom to Make a Difference*. Graduates, during your time here the faculty has sought to empower you to become wiser and to go out to make a difference. That is, I believe, what Dean Carle and the faculty of old intended for us.

I have had the good fortune of being able to pursue my passion for 56 years, to learn and to go out and serve, and I hope that – occasionally – I have had the wisdom to make a difference.

The major thrust in mathematics education when I graduated was on *The New Math*. Many of us graduated in the spring of 1957 with a math major that had not quite meshed with this *New Math* curricula and so we started our graduate work in the fall of

1957. Knowing about the math-ed program at KSC, and the work of my good friend, Dr. Ferruci, I'm quite sure that such is not the case for this year's math-ed graduates. However, the lesson here – more pertinent now than then – is that no undergraduate major will prepare you for the rest of your career – maybe not even for the first year of your work. So, be ready to learn anew, which is part of Wisdom to Make a Difference.

Today's major focus in education is STEM – S, T, E, M - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. If some of you are worried about the absence of the humanities in all of this, know that there is already a move to address STEAM, where the A stands for the ARTS. Such a broadening would reflect the 15th Century work of the great minds of that time, such as Leonardo DaVinci, artist, scientist, and mathematician. He was one of the greatest minds of the Italian Renaissance, and his influence on artists and scientists of the following generations was enormous.

(By the way, it has been proposed that we further modify STEAM by adding an R for reading, thus having STREAM. And I was told just last month that History wants a piece, but no one is quite sure where to put the H!)

The STEM focus is further nurtured with new standards for K-12 education in mathematics, literacy, and, soon, science. The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics call for a revised curricula that is taught with an emphasis on problem solving, reasoning, modeling, applications, the recognition of structure and connections, and effective communication. Note that all of these under gird a host of other disciplines and are at the core of their work. Note, too, that these goals and objectives complement what KSC seeks to do with its focus on integrated studies and its commitment to communication and quantitative literacy. Some of the majors housed in the new Technology, Design, and Safety Center, such as product design and architecture, include in their

descriptions an emphasis on the artistic element in such majors – while recognizing the important role of mathematics. Leonardo would surely approve.

I am most humbled by the honor of this degree from my Alma Mater and I will cherish this moment for a long time. Edith Wharton wrote: *There are two ways of spreading light; // to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.* I believe my primary role has been as mirror, and, only occasionally, perhaps the candle. I trust that in the spirit of Wharton, you will find your role as Candle and/or Mirror and recognize the wisdom in honoring both.