

## **Endowment Speech**

**by Ferrin Harrison for presentation September 26, 2009**

The Kattis and I have done one step of creating an endowment for academic excellence. The remaining steps are for you, the trustees, staff and students. We hope the trustees will generate a yield from the endowment without dissipating the principal. We hope the staff will teach with as much excellence as they can. We hope students will learn with as much excellence as they can. If any of the three do not, this endowment can be in vain.

One of my insights is that as technology increases, the power to destroy increases faster than the power to heal or create. Although it may seem strange to a graduate student who is concerned about having any power at all in the future, I expect you to become a powerful group. The greatest of you will be intellectual generals of the society, followed by colonels and lieutenants. The technology accumulated in recent centuries is sufficient to do damage on a scale never before experienced, and it is still increasing though the velocity may slow. One of your duties is to lead the society to maintain a balance, to not go too deeply into the use of power to destroy. The foundation of good behavior is ethics. The foundation of ethics is religion or spirituality.

### **Discretionary supplement:**

My prevision is that we are in a world depression which will end sometime between 2080 and 2120. Your mission as the lieutenants to generals of the society is set, whether you wish it so or not. Your mission is to pursue your vocation with as much willingness, integrity and diligence as you can, so that the world economy can bottom and go up. It bottoms by the value of your labor being worth more than the value of your wages, and you can calculate what state your grandchildren if any will be in to continue working the world out of depression in the year 2080.

How I arrive at this prevision is not a five minute question. To understand the answer is closer to a graduate credit hour, and to understand that the answer is true reasonably takes another five graduate credit hours. If you would like to know, look me up later.

Many of the governments of the world would like that we not experience a century of depression. With all due respect, they are on a fool's errand. Altering the principles of nature is beyond their capacity. When they are given seats as heads of state or chairs in parliament, they are being charged to do what they can. When you receive your doctoral or masters degree, you similarly are being charged to do what you can. My wish for you is that you will not return disrespect for disrespect, sloth for sloth, turpitude for turpitude. If you live your life in a right way, statistically, you will be better off for it on your seventieth birthday.