

Farewell Remarks
by
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to the
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Florida State System of Higher Education
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A recent horoscope of mine observed that I would be dealing with matters affecting my marriage. The observation made me think of what Chancellor York said when I came to Florida early in 1979. He said, "I think you and FIU will have a good marriage."

Well, I believe it has been.

What constitutes a good marriage anyway -- to a spouse or a job?

Two essentials come to mind. First is heeding the counsel given me years ago by Octavius Sisson, our philosophy professor at Reed College. "Never let the sun set on your anger, or you may corrode the shining surface." For forty years, Mary Ann and I have tried to keep that advice in mind.

For seven and a half years here at FIU, I have also tried to remember the shining surface during some pretty heated struggles with students, colleagues and the Miami community.

Another ingredient of the happy marriage was expressed by Jim, who was Huckleberry Finn's black buddy, about his trip down "The Big River" (in the musical of the same name). When asked how it was, he responded, "considerable trouble; considerable joy." Isn't that an appropriate comment for any marriage? In the joyous days, you always have to be ready for the lurking trouble, and in the troubled times, remembering the joy helps get you through.

One of the big joys is companionship. In the work we have done as president with other college presidents, with community leaders and foundation members, with students, faculty, and staff, I have felt camaraderie and mutual affection in the campaigns we have waged together to make FIU and Florida better educationally than we found them. And together, to a great extent, we have succeeded. As our separation begins, I carry warm memories of shared experience and accomplishment.

Among the faculty especially, which gave me its University Service Medal at commencement, I feel not only deep mutual respect but shared conviction about the important issues ahead and concern that FIU's notable prospects be realized in a new relationship under new leadership.

For FIU, there are great expectations. But great expectations require substantial support. As you know, we have dealt with what we perceived to be the essentials for a new, vital institution growing in a new, vigorous community: quality, growth rate, resource needs, numbers of programs and challenges to our readiness to accomplish them. However, another issue remains which we and the next FIU president must tackle. It relates to how fast our Cinderella readiness to get out of the kitchen, acquire the raiment and be

ready to go to the ball -- or even some ball games -- in the proper company will be supported by the public and the regents.

Lower division, graduate programs, CUP and housing have all helped establish new roles and new horizons for FIU. They have helped significantly to meet the expectations that our Miami population and indeed the world has for us. The University is attracting growing attention in many, many quarters. In my outside activities with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, International Association of University Presidents, InterAmerican University Council for Economic and Social Development, Caribbean Central American Action and other boards and committees on which I have served, I have stressed our involvement and interest on the big stage, and the response in recognition and acknowledgement of our progress is remarkable. So, as the University moves into a new phase, with new leadership, I hope the Regents, our alumni and the community will become better acquainted with and involved in FIU than they yet have.

Your roles in supporting our programs were crucial to the University's new visibility and to the respect it is gaining for academic strength and significance. Now, all this gives FIU some new responsibilities for addressing some gigantic problems with Florida's leaders. It involves how we can help arrest, even reverse some of the negatives our city, our state and even our nation have -- vice, drugs, treatment of minorities, the poor, the exercise of citizenship and respect for constitutional protections. Our responsibilities also include such material matters as environmental protection, human resource development, land use and business and economic innovation that will provide prosperity on the last American frontier. Some good beginnings have been made in the Biomedical Research Innovation Center in downtown Miami and in the Urban Design Center we expect to be established in Hialeah.

Grappling with these issues as FIU's president has added to my fair share of the troubles and joys that go with the office from which I now depart.

"Time passes fastest when you are having fun," a student said to me recently.

Time has flown for me. And this mostly because you, all of you, have provided a working context full of exciting stimulus and response.

I hope you will indulge even more your involvement in and enjoyment of Florida International University.

For what you have done for me, with me -- and even to me, I thank you. It has been a good marriage! I look forward to a wonderful divorce.

With Affection,