



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT &  
PROVOST

Closing Remarks, Dr. Brent Betit  
Landmark College Graduation Ceremony  
May 15, 2010

In our history, Landmark College has celebrated nearly 50 graduations on this campus, and each has held deep meaning, – and the poignancy associated with the imminent departure of so many young scholars that we’ve appreciated, enjoyed, served, and cared for. We’re going to miss you.

But before we finalize that departure, acknowledge the completion of this phase of your journey to success, and see you off on your newly-minted wings, I’d like to acknowledge two men whose contributions to Landmark College and to generations of students have been profound.

Retiring professors Sam Prescott and Bruce Lord possess a combined 49 years of service to Landmark College. 49 years of classes, labs, tests, quizzes, papers, and – undoubtedly - more than a few Roloids.

Sam is a founder of Landmark College, coming to us on the heels of 12 years of service at Landmark School. So he has been contributing to the success of students with learning differences for 37 years. His quiet but unshakable passion for this mission is a testament to the strength of human character, and provides a truly profound example of humanistic service.

Bruce arrived just after Sam, and though his name isn’t engraved on the founder’s plaque, as one of the founders of the first credit-level collegiate coursework for students with learning differences in the world, Bruce is a pioneer and a founder in his own right.

I hope you will all join me in celebrating the exceptional service, the loyalty, and the devotion of two extraordinary educators, Sam Prescott and Bruce Lord.

But graduates, this day is about you – about your accomplishments and your future. At such memorable moments, speakers often reach for the wisdom and the exquisite language of our best writers, quoting their brilliance in order to acknowledge how meaningful and important a moment it is. So indulge me while I quote some wise and exquisite writers.

“When I think of Sallie I think of a dancer stretching her arms toward the sky, inviting and imagining what she can’t yet see.” That is from Professor Lynda Sperry, describing Academic Dean’s award winner and honors graduate Sallie Banta.

“Dan Brown has a wicked sense of humor. He is an avid academic and an enthusiastic scholar of the natural world.” Professor Abigail Littlefield.

“The discipline of an athlete, the imagination of a musician, the curiosity of a scholar, that’s what I see in you, Tom. Feet, hands, and mind integrated and used to their full potential. Running shoes that take you safely over rugged landscape as your mind urges you to push beyond yesterday’s best, a guitar with strings worn out from a thousand improvisations and replaced a hundred times, and now a confidence with authors and their works added to your repertoire.” Professor Ann Wheeler, describing Thomas Garrett.

“Her willingness to remain vulnerable to what most of us would prefer to ignore has made her consistently in my courses the moral compass of her peers.” Professor Humberto Ramirez, describing Hawley Proctor.

“Brown kept a low profile at Landmark. Taciturn, diligent, and possessed of a capacity for blazing insight, he made his way without seeking much in the way of publicity or fame.” Dr. MacLean Gander, describing Dexter Brown Rogers.

“I won’t easily forget how your slow-spreading and delightful smile reflected your obvious happiness and self-satisfaction of goals achieved.” Professor Debra Berigow, describing Neal Williams.

I wish I had time to read a sentence about every one of you, and quote every one of our amazing teachers, but it’s been a long day, you’re no doubt anxious to get on with the next step in your successful lives, and so I will close by quoting Lyn Sperry again: “It’s a delight to watch her grow interested in your experience, to imagine her mind wrinkle as it takes you in and her accumulated wisdom accepts you. All the while she learns and grows, working on sweeping the dust out of her corners. Her love of branching out is profound.”

What a wonderful image to end with. Branch out, each of you. The world is all yours. Reach your arms into the sky, toward the stars and the heavens. No one can stop you now.