

-Joking response to John Watret's comments concerning his favorite date is Dec 13, 2014 ie 12/13/14

My favorite date is March 14...ie 3.14 Pi (pie) day...

When the folks seated up here called me and asked me to talk to you, I agreed because I love this place. I also think pretty highly of you people! Walk around Embry- Riddle, open a door and there is always something interesting going on. You all are people with hopes/ dreams and you are going to accomplish a lot of them. One of my points today will be that you can do a lot more than you might suspect.

You also have people in your lives who helped you get to this launching pad. Let's remember to say Thank You! Parents! Relatives! Others! A lot of you are here this morning. Again THANK YOU for helping your graduate get this far!!.

I did ask, What am I supposed to talk about? They said, tell them a few important things that you know- preferably Helpful/ uplifting/ encouraging things. I thought about this. Many times, mostly in the early 1970's – after TV was in color.. It really isn't that long ago..., as I was leaving the house on my latest adventure, my mom would wave at me from the driveway and she'd holler -“Have Fun and Behave Yourself!”. I heard it hundreds of times..

There is my speech? Well.. I was advised, speak for 10 – 15 min.

Introspection time.. Do I know anything useful to this group, - I know a lot of you are probably smarter and harder working than I am? I am frankly in awe of some of you! I mean that!

I know I am not the traditional speaker. The usual graduation speaker is someone who did something very large. In years past, graduates have heard from Generals/ inventors/ aircraft designers/ company presidents.. The sort of people who eventually become statues. Me, I'm basically a footnote in a couple hundred things. I earned a living as an Airline Captain and ventured into management and went off the property a lot to work on things related to aviation and things where aviation knowledge and methodologies could help in other realms.

I started out flying sailplanes, working at Estrella Sailport SW of Phoenix. The Horvath brothers gave me my first job. I could talk about Soaring all morning. But I won't. I will tell you though, the people who helped you as a kid, gave you your first job / taught you how to do things/ the people who shared their knowledge... they will stay in your head forever. In my young life, it was the sailplane gang. You all have people like that. I encourage you to remember what people did for you and – here is my First Bit of Free Advice- pay some of that forward when you are in a position to do so. When you see a chance to help someone get started..1st job, Internship, please-give it your best shot.

Airline life took me to Austin TX in the 80's. That's where I really turned into a footnote. I spent too much time at work to be much more.

I moonlighted a bit doing legal research and also found time to help re-write a portion of a movie that was being filmed where I happened to be working on an archeology project. I helped wordsmith a song for one of our Austin locals. Heard it on the radio a few times. But I'm barely a footnote since these were someone else's things. I was just a repairman.

Later in my Texas airline days, I am several small footnotes in Mayan Indian archeology and the efforts to decode their written language. I first became interested as a tourist but I saw a way to use some aspects of my amateur astronomy hobby to help learn what was being written about with a system that was then lost to us. A few data points to help crack a part of the unique writing system that developed here in NA rather than in the ancient world.. I have probably 500 hours divided between the field, workshops and in conferences working on this. The people who write the books or get written about have 10s of thousands of hours..

Bigger footnote in an upstart airline, and in Aviation Safety programs in general. ASAP being just one example. About 150 days in Washington, fortunately spread over 15 years. I have been a footnote at several colleges, mostly using my aviation background in Human Factors projects. If I ever get an clone of an airline Hazard Free safety reporting system running in a hospital, showing them a better way to

deal with human error, I might get to be a book with footnotes, but it has been slow going..

I spent time being a footnote in the realm of International Sports Car racing. A second child hood for my wife and me.

Now I'm playing at being a footnote in airshows again. My 3rd cycle in and out of this. This time I'm flying a B-17. But I'm not a headliner. I am just background noise, compared to someone like our amazing Melissa Pemberton!

Now, from my perspective as this frequent footnote, I have learned some things worth sharing- Here is the Second bit of free advice- If you want to be the person they make into a book or statue, instead of being just a footnote, you need to start early, take charge of one important item and stay focused on it. Eat/ sleep/ and breathe it!. If you want a close by example, look at my Dad sitting there. His work on Crashworthy Fuel Systems is a perfect example. Me? I am involved in a lot of things. I truly value the idea of knowledge for its own sake. We are surrounded by so much interesting stuff. The result for me, I am pretty useful early on in a project. I bring in ideas from all over the place. Crosspollination they like to call it. I point out what I see. I make my recommendations and suggestions. Then, after making my inputs, I always had to go back to work... You can do more than this.

Work.. We can talk about work for a minute.

If you're not going to grad school, It's where you are going next. How does anything I've learned apply to you at work?

I have had jobs that are sometimes so much fun, you don't want to go home. Wanted to camp there. I've done that a time or two. I've had other kind of jobs too. Mostly I've been lucky flying for the airlines and doing other jobs that I run into along the way.

What can you expect?

Some of you know what your first job is. You are in the military. I don't know what the next 20 or 30 years will bring. I know that writing and thus recorded history is about 6000 years old, and there is no record of a worldwide very long term period of common sense, peaceful co-existence, everybody helping each other, Let's figure it out rather than fight about it.... That dream world is NOT just around the corner. There is always someone wanting what is someone else's.

I do know though, that whatever challenges we as a country will face, we are all better off, we are all safer, we are more likely to stay a free people because of those who were sworn in yesterday- you who are putting your life on the line to protect us. You are already the definition of an American Hero. Likely we will all need to say "Thank You" more than once in your career.

Some of you are headed to the airlines! I think things will work out well for most of you..in time.. Entry level jobs feature better equipment and I think pay will be trending up. I know you'll enjoy the evolution of the equipment. I know you will occasionally see things from the cockpit window that are so beautiful you'll not be able to describe what you see to those who do not fly. Yeah.. there are people who don't fly... oh well. Free country. I know you will work more than your neighbors think. I know you will get to see and know a lot of the world and how it really works and how others think and live. The job really is a window on the world. If you ever think that it is turning into just a job, If you hear people my age whining that it isn't the job we expected, ask yourself, "What is my HS peer group doing?". You'll realize again that working for a living really doesn't get much better...

Global Security and Intelligence? A big group here! Who knows what you'll know and what you'll do. Many of you won't be talking. I know it'll be interesting but I suspect you'll have times rather like the WW2 Bletchley Park code breaking people. You'll save lives and make our world safer and we'll never know. I'll say thanks right now!

Engineer/Science Majors– Something that I love about ERAU is that all of you get a reasonable amount of science/ math/. It is the language that most new knowledge is written in. Knowledge continues to grow exponentially. Sadly, most of our populous can only look at the pretty pictures, not understand what they really are, they read erroneous simplifications that come in the news, pop literature or, worse yet, forwarded emails. They don't really understand statistics,

etc. and they really don't know enough to understand what is being talked about. You don't get thru ERAU and become one of those people. By being scientifically literate, you are already making the world a better place. You, scientists, who will generate the new knowledge, You engineers who make use of it... It seems to me that our culture is beginning to again understand your importance. I think people forgot for a while. We can't have an economy of shrinking service industry dollars chasing each other around in a circle. We have to create and innovate. A lot of us are talking about STEM in education. They are talking about you people! ...The fact is, what our world will be like in a generation is very much in your hands.

I've been talking about WORK. .. Maybe in a few years, Life will begin to look like it is ALL work- BUT, as a frequent footnote I know 2 or 3 important things about this:

Every one of you have many interests in addition to what you'll make a career out of. If you didn't have hobbies/ daydreams/ dozens of other things bouncing around in your head that you want to do, you wouldn't be at this school!

I am here to tell you that you will do a lot of these things!

IMP. POINT 1 Stay in touch with what you love. Join or Stay in the prof. orgs., Do that now while you still get the student discount! Read the journals of the things that fascinate you. For me, outside of my aviation life, it is Astronomy/ architecture/ archeology/ biology... skipping ahead in the alphabet..medicine.. the list goes on. Stay in touch with what fascinates you. Stop occasionally and wander around in interesting things. Whatever it takes to stay in touch. Opportunities will come along much more often than you think. Opportunities to jump in and do something you always wanted to do. You have to be ready with a way to contribute. You have to know enough to be at the entry level.

I can tell you that of the people I know in my age bracket, the ones that are grinning and having fun are the ones who are always off doing something interesting and worthwhile or planning the next adventure. The ones who whine about being bored don't have this figured out very well.

IMP PT 2- Pay attention to the surroundings while working and even when goofing off! I'll give you a few of my examples:

Investment ops abound-

Investment opportunities from looking around is deleted to save time

In 1978, I worked here in Prescott as an air ambulance pilot for the Indian tribes. I had a couple hours off and decided to drive over to Arcosanti to see what it was all about. I'm not sure that I fully learned the answer to that, but I did see some interesting low tech ways to mold complex things in concrete.. Years later, I was on vacation in St Croix Hurricane Hugo left and weeks later we showed up with our dive gear. Architecture student volunteers from another college were already there helping with the recovery. They had some prefab building materials but were still missing some a lot of what they needed. I decided to help for a while. I carved molds in beach sand and lined them w/ plastic bags left over from sandbagging and cleanup. Rebar from downed fence wire. Pour the concrete. – I could help in St. Croix because I learned a few things sightseeing in Prescott. I also learned that Inquisitiveness works better than Obliviousness.

My only footnote in architecture. So far.

I have been amazingly lucky in so many ways, but I'll tell you what I learned from one of my big failures:

In early 1983 or so, I was furloughed from my airline job. I came back to Northern AZ and flew Grand Canyon tours, Air Ambulance. Probably some Fire Patrol for USFS. I saw some beautiful country! But I wasn't making \$1000/month. A come down from the airline. So I decided I needed to start an airline. With \$4 in my pocket. I actually had a pretty good idea. So good, I was surprised that I thought of it... I had listened to tourists at the Canyon talk about the other things they also wanted to see but they did not have time. My plan was to link Yellowstone Park/ Grand Canyon/ Carlsbad Caverns together with Las Vegas where people could enter the system. Add SFO where Asian tourist come in to the US . Foreign and American 3 season market .. plan to survive winter./ 1 good idea to fund getting going/ 1 source for 2 A/C that could operate out of high DA airports. Even had an expansion plan. The timing was perfect. All the resources were becoming available.... Practically overnight, a tax law change took away my method to raise capital./ No plan B/ Couldn't think of an answer. Gave up. Recalled, went back to

Austin and flew DC-9's for the airline. I took some management roles to learn more.

Nowadays I am on boards with CFO's of airlines. I know people who led LBO's of huge companies. I know lots of people who know how to solve that funding problem that killed my plan. Funny thing is, I knew a few people like that then. But it did not occur to me to ask for advice. If I didn't know the answer, I figured no one did. Really Dumb! Now I know to ask for help.

I Learned from this. - 30 years later... Step-daughter Angie had graduated as an RN, left home, took the dog and her husband with her and my wife and I finally had time to do something fun- She had managed the Dispatch/ Flt Operations Center of an airline while I was D.O. Phone rang all night for years.

So one day, I woke up thinking lets go car racing. Yes, you'll wake up with crazy ideas too.. Guaranteed. If you decide that common sense is not an overriding consideration and that you are just going to do it anyway, the first task is to break it up into small steps that you can handle and find a starting point. Aim the small manageable steps so that they climb to the goal. It helps to have a goal. We decided the starting point was a local racing club near us in Waterford Hills, MI. The goal became the 24 hour of Le Mans – the biggest race in the world by most measures. We were airline people, 50ish, grandparents already, operating out of our barn. I had learned something big from my failed airline idea! I knew that I knew some things. And I could list some things that I didn't know. Heck they write books about the things I don't know. Put 'em all together and you have a library. Of course, I don't know how many other things there are that I don't know. This time I'll ask for help! I started with the CEO of a pro sports car race series we would run for 4 years to reach the level of being able to run Le Mans. He took my call. He probably wondered who we were or maybe.. who did we think we were and what did we think we were up to. He spent 3 hours with me in his office in Braselton GA. I left his office with a very good idea of what I needed in the way of people with specific knowledge and skills. I also left with knowledge of how to start finding them. Thank you to Scott Atherton. . I'll mention that the consultant we hired for our Wind Tunnel program went to school you can guess where.

I was way ahead of 30 years ago. The point of this story is that I chose to find smart people to fill in the gaps. Asking for advice worked and we were off to the races.

It is not a perfect happy ending.. We ran the US Series for 4 years and we got even paid to run a bit in the Asian version of the series. Our opponents were all Factory supported teams. Ferrari, Porsche, Aston Martin, and so on... We beat them occasionally, they beat us more often. We finally made it to Le Mans in 2011. We beat some of them and outlasted a bunch more. Alas, we are once again just a footnote. 3rd place in our GT class puts you on the podium spraying champagne on everyone. It gets you a trophy and a shirt that is sized for some small European guy .. I guess they don't have Big and Tall. But it is just 3rd place. We are footnoted as the only Husband/wife team ever and as the only Privateer (non-factory) GT team to make the podium in modern times. Some think we are the last privateer.

Remember the requisite 10-15 minutes ago when I agreed to speak. I said I am here because I love this place.

Loved PRC airport first. Gliders/ racing gliders/ camping there. Learned a lot from very smart people around the campfire.

Deleted tributes to Prescott people to shorten speech

I got over thinking Embry- Riddle Prescott was in the way of our Soaring and camping on the airport. Began to love the enthusiasm of the students and the willingness and the sheer ability of the faculty to do what it takes to help the students do what they set out to do.

Even though you are leaving, I want to urge you to stay involved. You came here to take on the future. A few years from now, You'll be the present. The school will be here doing what it does. You might be working on things not even invented today. Please give some thought to staying a bit involved with Embry- Riddle. Maybe join an Ind. advisory group. Bring new industry knowledge into the school. You can help the next group of students meet your needs. You might be their employer. You might want to involve yourself in School- industry partnerships. You might be able to utilize future students as interns. **This school is as good as**

people can make it. You can be one of the people making it better even years after you leave. Please stay in touch!

Last bit of free advice- Have Fun and behave yourselves!