

PROFILE IN SUCCESS

We would like to congratulate Justen Raine on his recent graduation from Academy College with an A.A.S. in Aviation Business. Justen departs Academy with an amazing future ahead of him. Best of luck in your future endeavors Justen!

Tracey Schantz | Campus Director; Director of Education

Distinguishable by Superiority

by Justen Raine, October 2013

Good evening and thank you for being here as we honor the June and September 2013 Academy College Graduates. Let me begin by asking you all to congratulate me personally for being here on time tonight. The Academy College staff, and especially my wife, will tell you that it's no small achievement for me to be on time for my own graduation.

I want to share with you a phrase from the Academy College mission statement that caught my attention. Academy College aims to "aid students in developing the technical and soft skills needed to excel in the current job market." The word that really stands out to me is the word 'excel.' The dictionary defines it this way: "to be distinguishable by superiority." Allow me to re-state the mission with this definition in place. Academy College aims to "aid students in developing the technical and soft skills needed to be distinguishable by superiority in the current job market." This class of graduates has been taught, not simply to enter a new field of work, but to be the best in that field.

But, just what does it mean to be distinguishable by superiority? How do we measure superiority? Is it attained in career advancement, the increase of wealth, or recognition by our peers? This, I believe, is how most people would realize that superiority had been achieved. Allow me to propose a different method of becoming distinguishable by superiority. One of my favorite authors, C.S. Lewis once said "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil." What has been provided to us by Academy College is not a set of meaningless tools that will help us to attain greater wealth, celebrity status, or promotion within our respective fields, though a little extra wealth will hopefully come as a side-effect. The Academy College mission goes on to declare that they aim to "provide an atmosphere of learning that will enhance the students' ability in both professional and personal situations." In this is where the key lies to truly excel. Hard work, truthfulness, punctuality, and perseverance, are but a few of the most valuable tools we are leaving Academy College with. To be truly distinguishable by superiority is to apply these ethical and moral values in conjunction with our newly acquired career skills in our every day lives.

It is not enough to be good at our jobs, advance within a company, or get paid a lot of money for what we do. We must strive to be superior, not only in our knowledge and execution of our new careers, but also in our ethical and moral dealings every day. Neither shortcuts, laziness, half-efforts or stagnation will help us attain the goal of being distinguishable by superiority. We must be fully committed to maintaining our personal integrity, advancing our knowledge, and increasing our skill in the application of our career day in and day out. Let us not be content to be "clever devils."

C.S. Lewis also said "Hardship often prepares an ordinary person for an extraordinary destiny." Nobody here will argue that getting their degree from Academy College was easy! I know there are many like me who juggled a full-time job and family responsibilities with their educational goals. From working on those blasted research papers into the wee hours of the morning when we had to be up early to work the next day, to carving time out of our already busy schedules to attend class, to battling the weather to get that flight time in for my fellow aviation students, to bribing your kids with a few hours worth of cookies and cartoons to let you get your homework done... no? That was just me? Okay then. Don't tell my wife. In any case, this was certainly not an endeavor that was undertaken because it was easy. The challenges given us by Academy College will, more than anything, help us to excel.

We must take all the lessons taught to us over the last few years, not just the education we have received in our chosen field, but also the education in ethical and moral actions, and the simple fact that this was difficult and we saw it through to it's end, to truly become distinguishable by superiority.

Thank you.