

GREAT SPACE HUMBLER US (RIVIER COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS, MAY 13, 2006)

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I have long believed that life is a search for greater perspective. Not the glass half full or half empty kind of perspective, but more about our ability to step out of our current states of mind and see ourselves as we really are: small pieces of a much larger world.

That's why people love to study the stars and the ocean. Great space humbles us. We gaze at the stars, we ponder the millions of grains of sand at our feet. We question our existence and our impact in this world.

My time here at Rivier has moved me in this search. The life of a graduate student is about professional growth, it's about learning opportunities, and it's about sacrifice.

Having worked in the field of Human Resources for several years, this Rivier graduate degree has been about opening my mind to experiences outside of the day to day grind. It's been about perspective.

I could tell you about the business tools that I'm taking back with me, because I am. We have new resources to ensure that we do our jobs better, smarter, stronger. By now, I've got all of the MBA jargon down: I can outsource and downsize, analyze and synthesize.

But I'd rather share the intangibles—the ways in which my Rivier experiences have changed my perspective about the world.

Where else but in a class with Tom Pucchiarello, one of the most genuine people anyone will ever meet, would I learn the importance of “growing” into a manager who truly believes that all workers are doing the best they can given what they currently know?

Where else but in a Rivier Cultural Diversity class, would I have had the opportunity to embrace a prisoner at the NH State Prison for Women in Goffstown, who had finally passed her GED after weeks of coaching and just days before being paroled?

Where else but in the capstone MBA course with Professor Drouart would I have learned that Christopher Columbus was wrong? In this new world of economic and cultural globalization, the world is in fact flat!

For me, Rivier has been about opening my mind, stretching my soul, widening my eyes, and humbling my spirit.

And as these learnings are taking place, we're also living. While we're working in these full-time careers and going to school on nights and weekends, our families and friends, many of whom are in the audience today, have come along for the ride. To my family and friends here today, along with those who remain alive only in our hearts, thank you for your unending love and pride. I tell my husband that after these past years at Rivier, he has GOT to be a finalist for “mother of the year,” for I am surely not!

I am most proud to be standing here in front of my two beautiful, amazing daughters. This is for you, and thank you for your patience and love.

There's a funny saying for an occasion like this: “The tassel's worth the hassle.” I believe that to be true.

Sitting here in our caps and gowns at this ceremonial beginning of a new phase in our lives, we are all climbing a few more rungs up whatever Life Ladder we are on.

I'll ask something of each of you. Bask in the view as you rise. Feel the sun on your face. Look out at all of the opportunities awaiting you. For there are many.

But one last thing. Take a moment to turn around...look back down that ladder...from whence you came...reach your hand down...to support and guide those who follow.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

Congratulations to you all! Thank you.

* **CAROL M. KILMISTER** graduated with M.S. in Human Resources Management (*High Distinction*) from Rivier College in the spring of 2006. Carol lives in Dunbarton, NH.