



ARCHBISHOP WILLIAMS HIGH SCHOOL

MAN & WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

JUNE 7, 2010

Carmen Mariano, Ed.D

Thank you Mary Lou and thank you everybody!

I will do my best to be short, to be sweet, and to be seated.
But before I am seated, I will tell you a story.
And like all my stories, this one is... true.

Last fall, I attended a cross country meet.
At the time, twelve of our student athletes were competing against
Arlington Catholic on our home course.
In that meet, every athlete ran for more than two miles; most of it
through the woods of Braintree.

Now, when I say those athletes ran, I mean they ran.
They didn't jog or walk or pace or trot.
Each of those runners really ran for more than two miles.

One of our best runners finished fourth and was totally exhausted
as he crossed the finish line.
He stopped abruptly and hunched over, with his hands on his
knees.
He gasped for air over and over and over.

I thought he might faint, or get sick, or both.

I know I would have.

As he struggled to recover, I walked over to him, put my hand on his back and said, “nice job.”

He immediately looked up and found a way to smile.

Then, with grace, respect, and breath I don’t know where he found, he spoke.

What did he say?

He said, “Dr. Mariano, it really means a lot that you came.”

Ladies and gentlemen, please accept those same words from me, tonight.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it really, really means a lot that you came.

Tonight is one of those special times that is meant for friendraising – instead of fundraising.

It is one of those special times when we are here to simply enjoy each other’s company.

So yes, it really means a lot that you came.

Thanks for coming.

Thanks for your company.

And speaking of company, we are here tonight to honor the company of two very special family members of Archbishop Williams High School.

Why are we here to honor those family members?

I thought you’d never ask!

We are here to honor them because a picture is worth a thousand words – which means two pictures are worth two thousand words. And these two members of the AWHs family have been painting two pictures of strength, sacrifice, success, and support since they graduated from our school.

We are here to honor those pictures.

We are here to honor their pictures.

Which picture shall we honor first?

Well, ladies come before gentlemen, so let's start with this year's Archbishop Williams High School Woman of the Year and speaking of pictures, picture this.

Picture me at 12 years old – I know it's hard to believe – but once, I really was 12 years old!

Now, picture me at 12 going on a field trip to the Museum of Science.

Yes, I know it's also hard to believe, but there really was a Museum of Science when I was 12 years old and I really do remember that museum.

I also remember that field trip.

One of the exhibits we saw was about some fish and how fast they grew.

The exhibit had two tanks of water.

One tank was small.

The other was big – very big – very, very big.

The man in charge of the exhibit explained that, many months ago, he had put some baby fish in each of the two tanks.

“All of the babies are from the same mother,” he explained.

“So they are all of the same species and all have the same genes. Still, look at the size of these fish now.”

I did. My whole class did.

Then the man asked us all the same question.

What question? This question.

“Do you notice anything as you look at the fish now?”

We did.

What did we notice?

The fish in the small tank were all small and the fish in the big tank were all bigger.

In fact, the fish in the big tank were all much bigger.

Did the man feed the big fish more?

He said no.

Did the man give the big fish more air?

He said no.
More plants?
He said no.
More heat?
He said no.
Better care?
He said no.

“The only difference,” said the man “was the size of the tank.
The big fish had a big tank in which to grow.
So they grew and grew and grew.”

Now, I know what you are thinking.
You are thinking, “Nice story Carmen and congratulations for remembering back that far, but Carmen, what in the world does that fish story have to do with our Woman of the Year?”

Well, I thought you’d never ask!

Ladies and gentlemen, this year, our Woman of the Year put our cheerleaders in a tank that let them grow and grow and grow. That tank took our cheerleaders to Lynn, and to Taunton, and to Holden and yes that tank took our cheerleaders to Florida! And that tank let our cheerleaders grow and grow and grow. Yes, it let them grow into National Champions!
Was that easy?
No, it wasn’t but don’t take that from me take it from another picture – picture this.

After school one day, our head football coach was preparing for practice in our athletic director’s office when, one after another, five of his players came in to explain why they could not attend practice that day.
The ailments and complaints varied – from headaches to the flu; from muscle pulls to detention.
As the coach listened to each explanation, he turned to the athletic director and shook his head.

“What wimps,” was the message – but it was said without words.

After the last football player left, a cheerleader walked into the office.

She turned to the athletic director and said, “My coach said you needed these.”

Then she handed him some forms the director had asked for and she turned to leave the office.

“Where are you going now?” asked the football coach to the cheerleader.

“To practice,” she replied.

“Tell me something,” the coach asked.

“How many practices have you missed this year?”

“None,” the girl replied.

“None of us would ever miss practice,” she continued.

Then, she left the room and went to – yes – practice.

The coach turned to the Athletic Director smiled and said –
“Maybe I should take over the cheerleaders and we should ask their coach to take over the football team!”

Was it easy to help our cheerleaders grow into National Champions?

No, it was not.

Success does not come at a price.

It comes at a cost.

Success cannot be bought.

It must be earned.

Our Woman of the Year helped our cheerleaders earn their success.

She helped them earn their national championship.

In 60 years, no other group of athletes has ever brought that honor to our school.

No other coach has ever brought that honor to our school.

No other graduate has ever brought that honor to our school.

That coach and that graduate is the Archbishop Williams High School Woman of the Year for 2010.

That coach and that graduate, ladies and gentlemen is Mrs. Kathie Lewis.

KATHIE SPEAKS

Yes, our Woman of the Year has drawn many pictures – of strength, of sacrifice, of success, and of support.

MAN OF THE YEAR

Our Man of the Year has done so as well – and he has done so in spades.

Let's talk about his strength first.

This is a man who is afraid of nothing.

He has no fear of flying – because he is a pilot.

He has no fear of animals – because he is a hunter.

He has no fear of failure - because he is a business man.

What is more, he is strong enough to make sacrifices and he has made enough sacrifices to earn success.

What is most, he has been strong enough to share his success.

How much success has this man shared!

I thought you'd never ask!

And I will answer with another picture – so picture this.

Picture the 10,000 men and woman who have graduated from Archbishop Williams High School in the past 60 years.

Have you painted that picture?

Good – now consider this – none of those 10,000 graduates – as generous as they have been – have shared more of their success with our school than has our Man of the Year has.

Now that is strength.
That is sacrifice.
That is success.
And that is support.

Great picture.

Great man.

Now try just one more – that’s right – picture this.

Picture a man who found a cocoon as he walked through the woods.

The man noticed that the cocoon had a small hole in it and there was motion inside, so he sat for moment and watched for the butterfly inside the cocoon to work its way out.

After several hours, however, the butterfly still struggled to force its body through the little hole.

Then, it seemed to stop making any progress.

It appeared as if the butterfly had gotten as far as it could, and could not go any further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly.

He picked up a small stick and opened the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily.

But as it did, the man noticed that the butterfly’s wings were very small and underdeveloped.

The man continued to watch because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would open, expand, and support the butterfly’s body as it flew.

But none of that happened!

Instead, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with those withered wings.

It was never able to fly.

What the man, in his kindness did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get

through the tiny opening, were nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings, so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

No, our Man of the Year was not the one who watched that cocoon or who made it easy for that butterfly.

Instead he is the man who has worked for a lifetime as hard as that butterfly worked before it got help from that man.

Yes, our Man of the Year understands the value of hard work and he has spent his life earning that value.

That is why, today he is a picture of strength, sacrifice, success, and support that each of us can follow – and each of us can admire.

Last fall when I asked this man to Chair the Steering Committee for our Capital Campaign he asked my why.

I told him because if he did, the Campaign would earn instant respect and enjoy immediate credibility.

That's right, our Man of the Year is a picture of those things.

He is a picture of instant respect, and immediate credibility.

He is a picture of strength, sacrifice, success, and support.

And just so you won't forget that, I will paint one last picture for us all.

Picture this; one night last April I got an email from a parent.

It read like this.

“Dear Carmen, I just wanted you to know that I spent last night in the emergency room of South Shore Hospital with an AWHS baseball player who hurt his arm at yesterday's game.

His mother wasn't at the game so I followed the ambulance and stayed with her son until his mom arrived.”

“Carmen,” the email went on, “I have some good news and some bad news.

The bad news is, the baseball player broke his arm at a game today sliding into 3rd base.

Then the email went on.

“The good news is, he still got up, ran to home plate, and scored the run that won the game!”

Ladies and Gentlemen, if our Man of the Year played baseball, he would have scored with a broken arm from first base instead of from third!

Yes, he is a picture of strength, sacrifice, success, and support.

Please welcome our Man of the Year, Mr. Dennis K. Burke.

DENNIS SPEAKS

As many of you have heard me say, when I was growing up, my parents were very concerned who my friends were.

If they told me once, they told me a thousand times, “Carmen, you are only as good as the company you keep.”

Well, tonight, both of my parents should be very proud. Because tonight,

I am in good company.

I am in the company of our Woman of the Year and our Man of the Year and of you – each of you and all of you are good company.

Now have you got that?

All that?

Good, just don't forget; and look out world, because here comes AWHS!