

**THE INAUGURAL KENNETH GRAY &
PHYLLIS PROPP-FOWLE LECTURE ON DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, AND INCLUSION***

MAJOR GENERAL (RETIRED) KENNETH D. GRAY[†]

It is great to be in Charlottesville again and to return to the JAG School, or as all of the old timers refer to it, “the legal center.” Carolyn and I spent four wonderful years here. We spent the first year in the advanced class, now the graduate course that most of you in the audience are in, and moved back here to the criminal law division when, then the new school, was opened in 1975. So, you can see how long ago that was and how old I am. Our youngest son, Michael, was born at Martha Jefferson Hospital.

Lieutenant General Risch, sir, thank you for that very kind introduction. General Nardotti, madame general counsel, fellow general officers, distinguished guests, and those joining us virtually for this

* This is an edited transcript of remarks delivered on 4 May 2022, to members of the staff and faculty, distinguished guests, and officers attending the 70th Graduate Course at The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School in Charlottesville, Virginia. This lecture is in honor of Major General (Retired) Kenneth D. Gray and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Phyllis Propp-Fowle.

[†] Major General (Retired) Kenneth D. Gray was the Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps’s first Black general officer. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army in 1966 after being named the distinguished military graduate of his Army Reserve Officers’ Training Corp class. He then enrolled in West Virginia University’s College of Law, under the Excess Leave Program, and earned his law degree in 1969. He was the only Black student in his law school class, and just the third Black student to graduate from the College of Law. Upon his graduation, he entered active duty in the JAG Corps, completed the Officer Basic Course, and went on to serve in various duty assignments, including a deployment to Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam, he was assigned to the Personnel, Plans and Training Office (PPTO), where he developed and implemented a program to improve the recruitment of Black and women lawyers into the JAG Corps. He spearheaded many initiatives, including recruitment visits to law schools with large minority attendance, and the creation of a paid summer internship for law school students within Army legal offices. He excelled in multiple leadership assignments throughout his career, including serving as the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, 1st Armored Division; Staff Judge Advocate, 2d Armored Division; Chief, PPTO; and, Staff Judge Advocate, III Corps and Fort Hood. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1991. In 1993, he was promoted to major general, and was selected as The Assistant Judge Advocate General of the Army (now known as the Deputy Judge Advocate General). He retired from the Army in 1997 and has continued to serve in significant leadership roles in the civilian community to this day.

presentation, thank you for being here this morning as we celebrate this inaugural lecture, establishing the first leadership center Academic Chair on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It is a privilege to speak on behalf of Lieutenant Colonel Phyllis Propp-Fowle. I am sure she would say the same if she could be here about how humbled we are to have this academic chair named in our honor. I know most of you have had the opportunity to read about Lieutenant Colonel Propp-Fowle, but for those who are joining us virtually and not aware of her achievements, let me take a few minutes to share with you about Lieutenant Colonel Propp-Fowle. I did ask her namesake, Ms. Phyllis Gaddis, if it was okay for me to read some of this to you and introduce her to you.

Lieutenant Colonel Phyllis Propp-Fowle was the first to open the door for women lawyers to serve our country as a Soldier and attorney. She was born in Jasper, Iowa, on May 8, 1908. She earned her law degree from the University of Iowa Law School in 1933, as the only woman in her graduating class. Lieutenant Colonel Phyllis Propp-Fowle was the U.S. Army JAG Corps' first female judge advocate, first female post judge advocate, the first female judge advocate to earn a combat patch and overseas service stripes, and the only female judge advocate to serve overseas during World War II. She joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in October 1942. In September of the following year, Congress renamed the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps the Women's Army Corps and made it part of the Army. Because of her legal training, she requested transfer to The Judge Advocate General's Department. On May 4, 1944, her request for transfer was granted. She became the first woman to wear the JAG insignia on her collar, and she was assigned as the Post Judge Advocate at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. In January 1945, then Captain Propp-Fowle deployed to Europe and served in various assignments, including in the legal affairs section in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, European Theater, Paris, and then as the Chief, Legal Affairs Division, Judge Advocate Division, U.S. Forces European Theater in Heidelberg, Germany.

In 1947, the Army discharged all women, so then Major Propp-Fowle was released from active duty in July 1947. She was immediately hired as a civilian attorney in the Military Affairs Branch, Judge Advocate Division, Headquarters, European Command in Heidelberg, Germany. She also remained in the Judge Advocate General's Department as a reservist and was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1949. Lieutenant Colonel Propp-Fowle retired from the Army Reserve as a lieutenant colonel in 1968. She died on June 12, 2000, at the age of 92, and the following year, she was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame.

Today, we celebrate the establishment of the Leadership Center Academic Chair on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in her honor. Please join me in acknowledging the great service of Lieutenant Colonel Propp-Fowle—the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion co-Chair.

It is an honor to be here to speak with you this morning. Now, I want to share my background with you. I know General Risch talked a little bit about that, but I want to talk about some of the life lessons I learned during my career and how I was able to overcome the many challenges that I faced along the way. I also want to talk about the historical perspective of diversity in The Judge Advocate General's Corps in the early 1970s and what it means in relation to TJAG's efforts today on diversity, equity, and inclusion. And finally, if we have time, I will share a little bit about my retirement and transition to West Virginia University to be the vice president for student affairs.

You know, it is a long journey from where I grew up in West Virginia to standing before you today. I grew up in Excelsior, West Virginia, a suburb of War, located in McDowell County, the southernmost county in the state of West Virginia, located near the Virginia border. Welch is a kind of county seat located about thirteen miles from where I grew up in Excelsior. It would take at least thirty-five minutes to drive from my home to Welch around the winding roads, through the mountains, and through a couple of the coal mining towns of Coretta and Coalwood.

Over in Coretta, my father worked in a coal company as a coal miner. The company store was also located in Coretta. Of course, most of you probably know that, when the miners were paid, they spent their money in the company store, so the coal companies paid their employees and then the workers returned it to them by going to the company store to make all their purchases. Coal mining was the major employer of the people in that county. As General Risch said, I grew up during segregation and attended school in Excelsior, an all-black school. All twelve grades were in that one school. The elementary students were on the first floor, junior high on the second floor, and the seniors were on the third floor. It was the only black school in the region, so black students were bused from as far away as Virginia to come to that school. I would say that when people complained about busing later on, they really did not know what busing was. Sometimes it would take those students two hours to get home. If they played football or basketball and had practice, they wouldn't get home until very late in the evening.

Anyway, I grew up there during segregation and all of you are probably familiar with *Plessy v. Ferguson*. It is a landmark decision that was decided in 1896 where the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation laws did not violate the U.S. Constitution, as long as the facilities for each

race were equal in quality. A doctrine that came to be known as “separate but equal.” That was the law of the land until 1954, when the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education*. In that case, Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion of the Court, and he stated, “We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs . . . are . . . deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.” Although *Brown* was decided in 1954, it took ten years for it to reach McDowell County, where I grew up, which was the southernmost county in the state. There were locations in the state that integrated right away, but it took ten years for it to reach McDowell County. By that time, I had already graduated from school in 1962.

How many of you have heard of Homer Hickam? Homer is one of the rocket boys in the movie, *October Sky*. Anyone remember the movie, *October Sky*? It was based on his life story. Homer grew up in Coalwood, West Virginia, another coal mining town along that road to Welch. He grew up seven miles from where I lived. There were some similarities between us. His father was a coal miner, and my father was a coal miner. He was a couple of years ahead of me in school, but he attended Big Creek, the all-white school in the area. Our experiences were so different that we could have been a thousand miles apart. As many of you may know, Homer achieved success by later becoming a NASA engineer, which was his boyhood dream. Unlike Homer, I didn't dream of being a lawyer or a two-star general in the Army, or even a vice president at West Virginia University. I did dream about going to college, getting a good job, and being successful. My grandfather was a Baptist minister, and my father, a coal miner.

After eighteen years of working in the coal mines, my father was laid off because that is what they did back in those days when they got close to retirement. They would lay them off, so they would not pay them their retirement. My mother, who was a homemaker, went back to college and got her teaching degree and began to support the family. My family wanted me to have a life beyond the coal fields. They made it clear that, if I got an education, it would open doors to new worlds for me. My teachers also stressed the importance of a college education. They served as role models for African American students in that segregated school system. My parents and teachers stressed to me that I could do whatever I wanted to do or be whatever I wanted to be if I got an education. So, I have been fortunate to achieve many of my own dreams and to go further than I ever thought possible. It was not easy, and I had to overcome a lot of challenges and obstacles along the way.

As Booker T. Washington once said, “success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles which he has to overcome while trying to succeed.” I managed to succeed by having a foundation of values that helped me through the hard times, believing in myself, never giving up, and looking back to draw strength from where I came from. I always remember something that my grandmother used to say to me, “sometimes you have to climb up the rough side of the mountain to reach your goals.” That reference is to a gospel spiritual that was sung in our church. She knew that I would face a lot of challenges and obstacles in life and wanted to prepare me for the struggles ahead. She knew that I would need help from time to time to make it to the top, and she encouraged me to draw on my faith during times of struggle. I knew that whatever hurdles I would face, I had to work hard and never give up until I reached my goals. You know, Sir Winston Churchill was once invited to speak at the school that he attended as a youth. When he got up to speak, according to popular history, he simply said “never, ever, ever, ever give up, never give up, never give up, never give up,” and sat down. I never, ever gave up because I knew the obstacles that I faced would not define me, but the way I responded to them would.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said once that “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands during times of challenge and controversy.” During my career, as I faced many challenges along the way, I drew strength from that quote, and I drew strength from looking back where I came from. I looked back to Excelsior Bottom, West Virginia, where my parents and teachers taught me about the difference between right and wrong and the importance of doing what is right. I look back to the ROTC Cadre at West Virginia State College, now West Virginia State University, where they taught me the professional ethics of being a Soldier. I look back to my law school professors at West Virginia University who taught me about the professional responsibility that is required of a lawyer. My success is based on those life lessons and how I learned to cope with the many life experiences I faced along the way.

It is important to have a strong foundation of values underlying all that we do. For me, that foundation is a set of values I learned in the Army and guide my everyday life. I call them the five C's: commitment, competence, candor, courage, and compassion. These are key qualities that a leader needs to have. They are qualities that transcend professional boundaries. I was always committed to what I was trying to accomplish, and I knew I had to be competent in all that I was doing. I had to know my job and do it well. Candor is absolute integrity. I had to be honest in all that I did. I had to have the courage to make potentially tough decisions and the

compassion to understand that everyone is human, and everyone makes mistakes that we need to learn from. There are so many people who touched my life throughout these years and helped me create a foundation for success. Upon that strong foundation, I was able to build a more successful career than I ever dreamed possible.

There are also four pillars that supported my successful career. The first is my law school experience of being the only African American student in the entire law school for the three years that I was there. I was the third African American student to graduate from the WV College of Law when I graduated in 1969. Carolyn and I have very fond memories of our time there, and we have made lifelong friends. That experience also allowed us to assimilate very well when we were assigned to JAG offices where we were the only African Americans in the office. You know, Morgantown, West Virginia, where WVU is located, was a lot different during that time. It was the mid-sixties. Most of you are too young to picture the sixties. There are a couple of us here who can do that. As African Americans, we were still in the struggle to be treated with dignity and respect.

I spent my first year in law school living in a residence hall because Carolyn had taken a job in Cleveland before I got accepted to law school. Then, she got a job during my second year of school at Flats Elementary School. It is no longer there. It was replaced by a hotel, which was then replaced by a bank. She got her first teaching job in West Virginia there. Unfortunately, we could not find a place to live. We would call, and the apartment would be available, but when we showed up to sign the lease, it was suddenly not available for us to lease. So, we decided that we were going to buy a mobile home. There was a mobile home park right near the school within walking distance, and the sign said, "we have spaces for rent." We decided to buy a mobile home. We returned to Morgantown about a week before that mobile home was to be delivered. You can probably guess what happened next. As an aside, back then, Lieutenant Gray did not have the savvy or common sense to realize what was going to happen next. My wife said sometimes that still exists. But I digress. So, we knock on the door of a mobile home park owner and explain our situation: "We are staying at a local motel, and our mobile home is coming in a week. Could we rent a space to park it? We are kind of desperate." There was this long pause. He looked at us and told us that he could not rent us a space because he would lose all of his current customers, and no future customers would want to rent if they knew we were living there. Now, if I stopped right there, in this story, the takeaway would be that this must be one racist individual, and this must be a racist town. However, that is not the end of the story. His next comment to us was that, while he

could not rent to us, he knew someone who would rent us a space, and he gave us that person's telephone number.

We returned to our motel desperate because this was kind of our last hope. I picked up the phone to call this person, and there was no dial tone, but I heard someone on the other end of the line, so I said, "hello." There was someone on the other end of the line who said "hello." This was the other mobile home park owner calling us to offer us a space to park our mobile home because the one person who could not rent to us had called him, told him about us, and we connected that way. So, one of takeaways here, and one of the life lessons that Carolyn and I learned well is that you cannot always believe that someone's actions are solely based on race. The mobile home park owner made an economic decision. That is what we concluded when he would not rent to us. The other life lesson was that there is a very basic good in most people, and sometimes it takes time for it to shine through. Here again, this is another instance where we are climbing up the rough side of that mountain and struggling to get to the top, to get towards our goal, and you have to have faith that a helping hand will be there to help you reach that goal. In the words of another spiritual gospel, "God may not be there when you want him, but he will be there right on time. He is an on-time God." Yes, he is.

The second pillar that supported my career consisted of the mentors that I had during my career. You heard comments that Lieutenant General Risch made describing the leadership at the time. Some of them were significant in providing advice and guidance that helped me be successful. The third pillar, the warrant officers, NCOs, and enlisted Soldiers who helped me adapt to the Army and to the JAG Corps. They are the backbone of the Army and the regiment. At WVU, my dedicated staff helped me be successful by their selfless dedication in getting the job done and making our students their number one priority. And, of course, the final pillar, the fourth pillar—my family, especially my bride and my best friend. Carolyn has been with me for fifty-six years this August. I cannot thank her and our two sons, Chris and Michael, enough for their support.

I know I stand on the shoulders of so many black officers who served before me, who paved the way for me to become the first black general of our Corps since its inception in 1775. I owe them a debt of gratitude for laying the foundation for me to be successful.

As I look back to my history in the Corps, I believe it is important for me to share with you what occurred related to diversity in the Army and the Corps. In the early seventies, when we still had a draftee Army, black Soldiers in the Army had expressed concerns of not having lawyers who looked like them to represent them in courts-martial. They did not feel the lawyers assigned to their cases understood their backgrounds, their

culture, and could not relate to them. This was their perception. Now, those lawyers were probably capable and competent to do their jobs and probably did their jobs, but, you know, sometimes perception takes the place of truth. So, in April 1972, because of those concerns about discrimination in the military justice system, then Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird established a task force on the administration of military justice in the Armed Forces. The task force looked at whether there was discrimination in the administration of military justice. Were the punishments and initiation of charges disproportionate based on race? The task force found evidence of both intentional and unintentional discrimination toward racial minorities in the military justice system. They also concluded that, in some cases, discrimination happened on purpose, but for the most part, it was not intentional, and it occurred despite the best efforts of commanders, staff, and service men and women to prevent it from occurring.

We know that, in 1973, when the all-volunteer force was initiated, some of the racial tension issues were addressed. Although some strides were achieved in racial equality and non-discrimination, some concerns about the treatment of and opportunities for racial minorities have persisted into the 21st century. So, what was the response of the Army and the Judge Advocate General Corps? As a result of what was happening in the Army and the perception of black Soldiers regarding representation in the early seventies, TJAG, then Major General George Prugh, decided to establish a minority lawyer recruiting program to focus on the recruitment of more black lawyers and more female lawyers. There were sixteen black judge advocates, and eight women judge advocates out of an active force of 1600 on active duty. Now, how did I become that minority recruiting officer for the corps? Well, when I returned from Vietnam in August of 1971, I was assigned to Fort Meade, Maryland, and I turned down an assignment to Hawaii because I was planning to leave the service. I had a job offer in Charleston, West Virginia, and I was planning to finish my obligation, get out, and go back home.

In October of 1971, I received a call to come to the Pentagon to meet The Judge Advocate General. It turned out to be an interview for the job of minority recruiter for the JAG Corps. When I was in Vietnam, I served in the Da Nang support command, and, during that time, a military judge would come to Da Nang to try all of our cases. That judge was Tom Crean. Tom was reassigned to the personnel, plans, and training office after his tour in Vietnam. I believe he was the one who recommended me for that particular job. I am sure I was not the first officer considered for the job because you had Captain Togo West in the Secretary of the Army's office and you had Captain Curtis Smothers up in the Secretary of Defense's

office. There were other black officers assigned in various jobs, but in any case, I got the job. When I went over for the interview, I took my wife with me, and they spent the whole time talking to her. They never really interviewed me. I think they just wanted to make sure I did not have two heads, two left feet, and could communicate well. They hired me for the job. I got part-time early on, and then, in late January 1972, I moved over to the Pentagon to be the minority recruiting officer for the JAG Corps full-time.

I developed the five-point program. Number one, as General Risch mentioned, making recruiting trips to the predominantly black law schools and making recruiting trips to those law schools that had a large minority lawyer student population. Second, we placed advertisements that were specifically designed and photographed in legal and other national publications, magazines showing black and female judge advocates performing duties as counsel or as a judge. Third, we worked with the National Bar Association to assist in recruiting black lawyers, and we made recruiting trips to the National Bar Association and American Bar Association's annual and mid-year meetings. Fourth, we actually set up recruiting booths in their exhibition halls to hand out materials, to talk to lawyers, and to tell them about the JAG Corp. This is probably the first time that any of this had ever occurred. We worked closely with the Army Reserve and National Guard to help identify lawyers who might want to come on active duty. And finally, number five, we established the summer intern program to hire fifty first-year law students and fifty second-year law students to come and work in our offices to see what our practice was. The idea was not necessarily to recruit them, but the idea was for them to come and see what we do, see the practice, and then return to law school to tell their classmates, serving as ambassadors for the JAG Corps. I guess the program is still in some form in existence today, some fifty years later. We are proud of that fact. Because I remember I can recall trying to get the last signature for that program and that last signature was a civilian in the basement of the Pentagon. Now, I have never been to the basement of the Pentagon. It was a scary place, but he was buried in a cubicle, probably about the same size as my cubicle up on the second floor. He had the power to sign that program and make it a reality. So, I am very proud of that.

Now, while not a part of the minority recruiting program, then about that same time, Tom Crean, who I mentioned, was in charge of creating or standing up the funded legal education program that had been approved by Congress in 1973. I had the privilege of serving on that first selection board of selecting the first twenty-five officers to come and go to law school and then subsequently come into the Corps. When I was reassigned to the advanced course, now the graduate course, following my tour there,

then Captain William P. Green Jr. replaced me, but assumed an expanded role in the personnel, plans, and training office. He was given the job of overall recruiting for the JAG Corps. He was instrumental in increasing our association with the National Bar Association by formally establishing the military justice section of the NBA.

Now, if we fast forward to current times, we know that George Floyd's death and the manner in which it occurred shocked the conscience of the Nation and led to many of the initiatives taking place today related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I believe the foundation for the future of the Judge Advocate General's Corps has been set with the establishment of a policy on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility and, of course, the implementation of the diversity, equity, and inclusion council and having its director, Colonel Rodriguez, be in charge. There has been a lot written about diversity, and a central theme running through the commentaries is that, when we talk about diversity, we are really talking about ourselves. We are all products of where we came from, how we were raised, and the values we learned growing up. Just as I shared my background with you, all of you also bring your cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and viewpoints to the subjects of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Diversity is not just about race. It encompasses race, but it also includes ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, and many more. I believe General Risch recognized this in his policy memorandum on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility when he said that the Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members of the judge advocate legal service possess the unique attributes, experiences, cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse team of legal professionals.

Equity is fair treatment and access to the right assignments and the opportunity to compete for advancement. I believe equity requires a look back historically of what has taken place in the Judge Advocate General Corps and making a commitment to make changes, which I think this policy will do and will accomplish. Inclusion ensures, as Colonel Rodriguez talked about, that everyone is a part of the organization and that they feel welcomed and connected. Accessibility, of course, ensures everyone can use facilities, including those with disabilities. Finally, in paragraph four of the policy, General Risch emphasizes that the Army and our judge advocate legal services team are stronger because of our diversity, and we have a collective responsibility to ensure every member of the force has the opportunity to reach their potential.

Now, Colonel Rodriguez and I, as we began our discussions getting ready for this presentation today, we talked about a lot of things. We agree that it is clear the leaders at the top have made a commitment and set in

motion, cascading down from the top, the desire to create a more diverse JAG Corps. We also talked about whether diversity and inclusion are about reaching specific numbers of a demographic group. We basically concluded that it is not just about numbers, but it is about making those numbers count so the voices of those individuals can be heard, so they have input, and they are included in the decision-making. It is important for the leadership to treat everyone with decency, to make them not only feel included in our teams but each of them indispensable in our entire effort. That is your calling as a leader in this team, and that is why this work is so important. Now, having a policy from TJAG and a DEI council is a good start, but the reality is that we all are in this together. It is going to take all of us. It is going to take all of you to accomplish diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the judge advocate legal services. So, if we take the five Cs that I talked about— commitment, competence, candor, courage, and compassion— you will realize that all of us will have to commit ourselves to getting this done. We will have to commit ourselves as members of the team to make the policy succeed. We must be competent in carrying out the policy. In other words, we must have the knowledge, judgment, and skill to get it done. We must have the courage to recognize our differences and the strength to reach out to others who are not like us. It will take candor and honesty to be open and sincere about what needs to be done. And it will take compassion, which might mean changing things about us to do what is necessary to help others and to help the team be successful.

One of the takeaways from this is that the effort to create a more diverse, equitable, inclusive force is sincere. If we all have the commitment, competence, courage, candor, and compassion, we can get this done. This policy creates a pathway to those who have not felt included before. I believe it is going to be a challenge to make diversity, equity, and inclusion a reality, and tough for all of you as leaders. In their book, *The Leadership Challenge*, James Kouzes and Barry Posner talk about what it takes to lead. They discussed the five practices of leadership. You must model the way, set the example, and make sure values align with the vision of the policy. You must inspire shared vision to make sure other members of the team have those same values and vision to make the policy a reality. You must challenge the process by finding ways where necessary to change, grow, and improve to make the policy a reality. You must enable others to act so they feel empowered to lead at their level to make the policy a reality. You must encourage the heart by recognizing, appreciating, and where appropriate, celebrating and rewarding the accomplishments of the team. And of course, Kouzes and Posner say the

foundation of all of this is credibility because your team must believe in your credibility. Without credibility, you will not be able to lead this effort.

I want to leave you with a few concluding thoughts. When I was about to retire, I was not sure what I wanted to do. I would have lunch occasionally with some of my former law school classmates and one of them said to me one day, "you should do something that warms your heart." Well, the job as vice president for student affairs at West Virginia University was certainly a job that warmed my heart, but it almost did not happen. Four years earlier, as General Risch mentioned, I had been nominated for a vice president's position at West Virginia University. Well, I was just beginning my statutory tour, and I could not accept it because I had four years left to serve. Almost four years later, as I was about to retire from the Army, I remember receiving an invitation in the mail, inviting us to a football game and a pregame brunch. Of course, the invitation came from the West Virginia University president. Well, Carolyn and I go, and I thought maybe this is an opportunity to get a job at the end of my career here. We get to the brunch, and bump into the president as he was wandering around greeting everyone. We were chatting, and it was pretty clear he had no clue as to why we were there because I later learned that they had these rosters, and people get invited to these functions from that roster. As a member of the Academy of Distinguished Alumni, it was just my turn to get invited. So, we got to the game, and we get to the middle of the fourth quarter. No one has said a word about a job, so I turned to Carolyn, and I said, "well, I think we are going to have to come up with a different plan." The game ends and we are in the president's suite box, and we go down to the elevators, and they have locked the elevators down because the opposing coaches come down from the upper level. They lock the elevator so no one else can get on while they are going down. Someone said to us, "if you want to go down faster, there is a staircase right over there that you can walk down." It is a long way, but it is going down. So, we go over to the door, we open the door coming down from the upper level, and it is the president. The three of us join right there as we start down that long staircase, and we have an opportunity to chat. Of course, he is asking me to tell him my background. We get to the bottom and go our separate ways. Low and behold, he remembered that conversation when they needed a vice president for student affairs some few months later.

When I went to the interview for the job, I had interviews with the student affairs staff, students, faculty, university staff, and university leadership. My final interview of the evening was about 6:00 o'clock in the evening in the president's conference room and it was with the community folks, the chief of police, fire department chief, the city

manager, and the mayor. I did not know who was in what role. As I walked into the room, it turns out that the mayor of Morgantown was a woman, a black woman who had served several terms as the mayor, and she subsequently was overwhelmingly re-elected to several terms in the state legislature. Things have changed totally in that town.

My retirement ceremony was on Friday in the courtyard of the Pentagon that we affectionately called “ground zero” and in attendance was the Secretary of the Army Togo West and General Nardotti presiding. It was a magnificent event. It still brings significant emotion to me now because of all the people who were there, the band, and just the pomp and circumstances that surrounded my particular retirement. I retired on a Friday, had my retirement dinner on a Saturday night, drove to Morgantown on Sunday, and started my job as vice president that Monday. I do not recommend it. Take some time off because going from one tough job to another— you just need a little bit of a break.

Now, a week after the school started that fall, WVU was named the number one party school in the country by the Princeton Review. I have always been convinced that the only students who fill out those surveys that the Princeton Review sends out are people who are hanging around the student union, not going to class, not doing what they are supposed to do. They always love to put us as the number one party school. Every college has these issues with underage drinking. So, we had to come up with a program to combat underage drinking. We developed a weekend alternative program called, “Up All Night.” I organized a task force to come up with a plan in about three or four weeks. As a military guy, I saw a problem, and I wanted to get it solved, but I did not realize that you cannot do that easily in academia. You know, you have to study the problem for six months. You come up with a plan and then you get a budget six months later, and maybe a year later, you implement the program. I remember briefing this at the president's meeting, and they were stunned with what I was going to do. There was a stunned silence because they looked at me like this will never work. I mean, is this guy new to our system? This is not going to work, but what they did not realize was that everything already existed, as I saw it. Everything already existed in our student union. We just moved it from earlier in the week to Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. Thursday because the students told us, and data showed, that Thursday is the biggest party night of the week for college students. We had a safe and fun alternative for our students to go to in their student union. We had food, fun activities, and we served a hot breakfast from midnight to 2:00 a.m. We cut it off at 2:00 a.m. because the bars closed at 3:00 am, and we wanted to get those folks in the bars a meal, so that when they went back to their residence, or off campus

residences, there were no issues there. Emergency room staff, nurses, and doctors told us this made a big difference in their patient numbers and prognoses. The damage in the residence halls went down, and the damage on off-campus housing also went down.

This program was so popular that colleges and universities from all over the country came to study the program to see if they could implement it and do the same thing. Good Morning America came and did a segment on our program as an alternative to underage drinking. I am very proud of that because the program still exists today. It was started in 1998, and it is still going on today in WVU, just like the summer intern program. I guess these are two of my legacies that I am most proud of.

I want to leave you with just a couple of comments here. When I was at the Pentagon, I used to hold a staff meeting every Monday morning to get ready for the week that was coming up. I continued that when I got to WVU, and I noticed at times during those meetings, my staff members would receive a telephone call on their cell phones. They would look at their phone and not answer the call. I finally asked one of them one day who was on the phone. He replied, "it was just my daughter." I told them then if calls come from your children, your parents, and so forth, always answer the phone. You never know when that call might be an emergency. What we are talking about in these meetings are topics that are important, yes, but your family comes first. The second thought I want to leave with you—how many of you have read James Patterson's book, *Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas*? Well, James Patterson fans did not particularly like the book and were disappointed because it was not an Alex Cross novel or it was not about the Women's Murder Club. It was a love story. I want to share something with you from the book that I shared with my staff at West Virginia University. In the book, Suzanne was a doctor at a major hospital. She worked so hard and was so stressed out that she had a heart attack at a very young age. The doctor treating her shared this philosophy with her that I think we can all use. It is called the lesson of the five balls, and it goes like this. He said, "imagine life is a game in which you are juggling five balls. The balls are called work, family, health, friends, and integrity. You are keeping all of them in the air, but one day you finally come to understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls family, health, friends, and integrity are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be scuffed, nicked, and perhaps even shattered." Once you truly understand the lesson of the five balls, you will have the beginning of balance in your life.

On behalf of Lieutenant Colonel Phyllis Propp-Fowle, thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. God bless all of you who serve our

great country. God bless our regiment. God bless our Army, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much.