

GERALD B. THORNE, vice-president of Wilson and Company, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws at the June 6 Commencement and gave the Commencement address. A native Missourian, he earned a B.S. in Agriculture degree in '25 and an A.M. in '28, and was an instructor in economics here from 1925 to 1929. The text of his address, "Partners in Progress," begins on this page.



Commencement is a memorable occasion.

It is a thoroughly happy moment. Students are proud to have achieved one of the earliest goals of their lives. They are proud to have become graduates of the oldest University west of the Mississippi River.

And they are filled with pride in being able to participate in the many other traditions surrounding such a wonderful institution as the University of Missouri.

Many also are undoubtedly somewhat relieved that such a moment has actually arrived.

The hearts of parents are beating a little faster today, as they see their hopes and dreams realized.

And even the University itself reflects a prideful air in having fostered this One-Hundred-Fourteenth Graduating Class to join the company of the prominent and renowned alumni who have preceded it.

Today's college graduate is entering a fast moving world. It is an accelerated era of technology with the role of education becoming increasingly vital. Everyone is interested in increasing the tempo. We members of industry now want graduates to accomplish in five years what our generation performed in ten.

Everything moves at a faster pace. More horsepower is generated, and more performance is demanded. Industry did not conceive this. It merely met the demands of the consumer, and your future thus was molded.

This acceleration is more pronounced in our country than any other place in the world. With only

6 per cent of the world's population and land area, there are more young men and women attending our colleges and universities than in any other nation. Our industry and technology have blessed us with a standard of living unequalled anywhere, at any time.

Now let's consider the numerical increase in college graduates, and the extent to which this is accelerating. During this month of June, on over 1,800 campuses across the nation, degrees will be conferred upon nearly 300,000 students. Twenty years ago, there were only 143,000 graduates taking part in such ceremonies. That was then considered a most impressive total! Yet, two decades in the future, it is estimated there will be at least 650,000 receiving degrees come Graduation Day.

These accelerated trends are highly significant for the college graduate. They point up the importance of a college education if one aspires to be among the leaders. They emphasize the need to continue the educational process beyond the campus.

In this new environment, the college graduate must be on his guard that he does not fall prey to a disease we might call "driftitis." It works silently. It causes the new graduate to drift with the tide, moving from job to job in self-imposed frustration. In mild form, it may result in the loss of several years of time—in acute cases, it can actually destroy what was potentially a highly promising career.

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Fortunate indeed is the young man or young lady who early in life recognizes the hazards of this malady and begins to practice preventive medicine. The prescription reads substantially as follows: "Through careful self-analysis, determine a long-range master goal for your life. Once you know where you want to go, develop a plan for achieving it."

The college degree marks the completion of the ready-made phase of your education. Your curricula have been planned for you and presented to you. From Graduation Day on, it becomes a "do-it-yourself" program. No longer is your course laid out for you on a tailor-made basis. Your master goal, once determined, should be comprised of intermediate goals—each moving a step closer toward achieving your ultimate. This will furnish you with your own box score to check off along the way.

Unforeseen Events

It is inevitable that occasionally unforeseen events will arise that will cause you to alter your course. At such times, a firmly fixed master goal is invaluable. You do not lose direction as you revise your plans. Aimless drifting is avoided.

We have stressed the critical importance of individual initiative in continuing the educational process beyond the campus. This is not to minimize the many opportunities existing today for guidance and counseling along the way. Most business firms today are eager and willing to provide additional training and continuous counsel to help you become more effective in your chosen field. There never has existed a period providing greater opportunities—either for alternatives in types of work or for planning master goals.

Many of the employee training and development techniques being used by industry today were either borrowed from the educational field or were cooperatively developed.

For example, in numerous companies, including the one with

which I am associated, every supervisor appraises the performance and potential of each employee under his supervision once each year. Such checks and measurements formulate an effective means of adapting an individual to his job. They reveal—both to him and to management—the means by which he can improve himself and his contribution to his job. These procedures originally came from the field of education.

The counseling with the individual employee, which follows these appraisals, provides an effective means of working out step-by-step-training experiences needed to improve his performance and speed his progress. Here, again, the technique of counseling was taken from the educational field.

Programs may be worked out with the employee calling for special on-the-job training or further academic work. Under the policies of our Company, the cost of such academic programs is shared on a 50-50 basis between the Company and the employee.

These examples serve to illustrate that industry is working with educational institutions, and at an increasing tempo, for the purpose of continuing the educational process for the college graduate. In a very real sense, industry and education are "Partners in Progress"—progress in developing our most priceless asset—human resources!

Both education and industry have essential roles to play in carrying out this progress at an accelerated pace. These roles complement each other.

Partnership Grows

This partnership between industry and education extends in both directions. Education is learning from industry which courses of study need be incorporated into various curricula to qualify students to best meet the future needs in industry. Each of these two great groups is acquiring a better understanding of the programs and problems of the other. The more complex society becomes, the more important it will be to blend the "ready-made" and "do-it-yourself" types of education into a continuous process in order

to keep human resources adequately equipped.

As we interview and counsel with college graduates, we are frequently asked to express our views as to what factors we consider most important in achieving a successful business career. These queries frequently represent a search for a formula for success. While there is no pat formula, there are, in our judgment, three areas of crucial importance.

First, is technical competence—mastering the technical knowledge in your chosen field. The need for this is obvious.

Human Relations

Second, is the ability to deal effectively in the field of human relations. In part, this simply means your capacity to get along with your associates. With the increased complexity of business, greater emphasis is being placed on the "team" approach in corporate management—in fact, in all types of administration—business, education, and government. Therefore, working effectively with people is more important than ever.

Much more is involved in this than just being a "nice guy." Actually, many young men would be well advised to become tougher. The best human relations requires square shooting and frankness, with a liberal application of consideration for others. It calls for the development of a sincere liking for people, even though we may dislike some of the things they do.

But to become really proficient in human relations, we must do more than get along with others—we must also develop that most difficult skill of communicating effectively with them. We can give someone our ideas about a given problem, but there has been no effective communication *unless* that person completely understands our viewpoint, and we in turn have an accurate understanding of his.

Part of the communication problem can be solved by mastering the ability to write and speak the English language. Personally, I disliked taking English in school. I just couldn't fathom why it was necessary. How wrong I was! The frame had hardly arrived for my diploma before I realized how es-

sential communications were—both the written and the spoken word.

In addition to giving accurate expression to your own ideas, it is equally important to inspire others to communicate effectively with you. Good leadership requires two-way communication. Knowing the other fellow's viewpoint and attitude is essential if there is to be a healthy, understanding relationship.

This is why a good manager is both a good teacher and a good listener.

The third element of success is the ability to tackle an *unfamiliar* problem, delve inside it, and conquer it. This quality is less important in some fields than others, but in the business world it is vital. The broader responsibilities that go with advancement often include areas filled with unfamiliar problems. The man or woman who has been reaching out from his field of specialization, and has demonstrated a capacity to deal effectively with unfamiliar problems is just naturally going to move toward the top.

Graduate's Advantage

In this basic quality, the college graduate carries considerable initial advantage when he enters the business world. As a student he was frequently exposed to the basic pattern. On many occasions he was given an assignment completely foreign to him, and required to master it. In industry, this basic pattern does not change significantly. Practice, followed by more practice, on problems of increasing complexity, helps to develop the ability to walk with confidence on unfamiliar ground.

In raised gold letters on the lobby facade of Chicago's new Prudential Building are these words:

"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO PREPARE FOR IT."

This quotation has great meaning for the college graduate. It calls for well-laid plans for continuous development toward a master goal.

Such preparation requires performance on each job as though one's entire career depends upon it. Advancement, today, is not a matter of whom you know, or

whom you marry; it is based upon performance. The promise of tomorrow is written in the performance record of today.

You young men and young ladies who have careers ahead of you in industry, the professions, or that most sacred institution of all—the great American home—have two fundamental questions to ask yourselves:

Where do I want to go?

How do I want to get there?

The answers are everywhere. Only you can transform them into reality!

CROY AT A GLANCE

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I didn't have the courage to tell my folks I wasn't going to graduate. My father wanted to surprise me, so came down to see me graduate. I went to the depot to meet him, and there he was with the family "telescope" and his new Congress shoes with the little pull-up straps in the back. He never wore a collar in his life, and there was the shirtband with a bone collar button dangling from one side.

I couldn't get up my courage till the very morning my class was to graduate, then I told him. He sat pulling at his brown, work-scarred knuckles, then he said, "Homer, I don't care what these professors say, I think you're smart."

While I was at the University of Missouri, I became the first student in the first school of journalism in the world. The dean was Walter Williams, a name revered by newspaper men of the Middle West. There was such a prejudice against schools of journalism then that I couldn't get a job after I graduated. Pretty soon I realized this, and piped down about having gone to a school of journalism, and landed a job on the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

I was let out because I fumbled a story, but it didn't really matter because I was working nights and during my free time and wanted to try New York, anyway. I came to New York, but wasn't able to get a job on a newspaper. But I was still selling trickles, so there was no park-bench business.

One day I heard that Theodore

Dreiser was looking for an editorial man. It was stretching it a bit to call myself an "editorial man," but I went down to the Butterick Building, where he was editor of three women's magazines, and talked myself up. But his mind was on the street. I continued to talk, but knew I wasn't getting anywhere. Then his mind seemed to come to attention and he looked at me as if seeing me for the first time.

"You said you were from Missouri, didn't you? Well, where is Washington, Missouri?"

"That's where they make the corn-cob pipes."

He stopped shuffling his paper and said, "I've asked fifty people that question, but no one has ever known. That's where my wife came from. I think I'll give you a chance."

I continued to work for myself at night and on Sundays, and finally felt I could give up the job. It was pretty hard splashing, but some way or other I made enough to get married and build a house in the suburbs. I had a rather good name for it. I think: "The Little House With the Big Mortgage."

Too Sure of Himself

But I was a bit too sure of myself, and during the depression the mortgage got it. That was another bitter moment: when I handed the key over to the bank.

My life has been, as I think about it, a series of lean and fairly prosperous years. Things began to be better after I had to give up our home. I wrote "West of the Water Tower" and, later, I wrote "They Had to See Paris." This became Will Rogers' first talking picture, and I was whisked out to Hollywood to work with him. I wrote more of his movies than any other person.

I have written fourteen novels, but only two have been successful. The others were about what you think.

I have learned, through a lot of kicks and shoves, to do a thing the best I can and thank God if it is successful; and to try again if it fails. Looking back, I've had far more failures than successes; and yet I wouldn't have wanted to