

**Remarks by Dr. Regina Peruggi**  
**Phi Theta Kappa Induction Ceremony**  
**Kingsborough Community College**  
**Monday, May 17, 2010**

Good Evening. I'm delighted to be here this evening to share in this celebration. An honors program, such as this Phi Theta Kappa Induction, marks a special occasion for all of you gathered here. It particularly recognizes the extra effort that is required for excellence. I know that all of you have earned this recognition not only by your performance in class, your written work, and your grades on exams but, also, by the daily effort that you have put forth in pursuit of your educational goals. Many of you have worked while attending classes, some of you have had family obligations, others returned to school after a long absence – yet, despite these challenges, you succeeded. In fact, you excelled, and you should be proud of that this evening. This moment of celebration belongs to you. You deserve it.

In being inducted into the Xi Kappa Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, you're not being inducted into any ordinary society. Your local chapter is one of the largest and most active chapters in the nation. Here at Kingsborough it offers members a rich variety of co-curricular activities, on and off campus, including a Satellite Seminars Series and travel to regional and national conventions and conferences. Xi Kappa has been accorded Five-Star status, which means that it has met a rigorous set of criteria established by the national association. As you celebrate your individual achievement, however, take a look around you or think of those close to you who believed in you and in your pursuit of education. I think you'll realize that your personal accomplishment wasn't a solo act. It was a performance that was made possible by those around you who loved you and supported you along the way. Pursuing your studies at Kingsborough was an investment, a choice, and I believe you chose well. In choosing to learn, to think critically, to analyze competing arguments, you have opened yourself up to possibility. You have taken risk to move into the unknown, and you have accepted responsibility. Let me just say a few words about possibility, risk and responsibility.

Possibility. There are some notions concerning education that transcend time and place. To be well-educated means more than the ability to recall facts. It means that one really learns to think, to become able to look at the familiar or

the taken-for-granted and imagine the possibilities – how things might be different. Imagine for a moment how different things could be in this city. You probably take it for granted now, but you are studying in a community in which if you assembled all of your students together and asked them to speak in the language that they heard at home you would hear over 72 different languages. In this college, alone, you can discover the cultures of almost the entire world. Imagine if we took the respect for diversity here at Kingsborough and spread it throughout the city, what a celebration that could be and how we could capture worlds of knowledge for ourselves and our children...knowledge that could help us live more peacefully and work more effectively in an increasingly globalized and internationalized society. So, to be educated is to believe in possibility.

To be educated is to take a risk that things may be different and that you yourself may become different. When you open yourself up to the pursuit of knowledge, you take a chance that this pursuit will lead you to unexpected places. You take a chance even that it might lead you away from those who have encouraged you and supported you in that pursuit. You take a chance that you might leave some of your own self behind. But this is a risk you have to take. Unless you continually challenge your beliefs and your assumptions and risk some of yourself, there is little hope for personal growth. And even if you end up reconfirming some of your long-held assumptions and beliefs, isn't it better that you've confronted your doubts and asked yourself the hard questions? You know, oftentimes even those of us who consider ourselves educated rarely want to risk looking at ourselves, facing our own fears, and seeing what are the real obstacles to our own fulfillment. So, education is also a risk.

Finally, responsibility. Some might say that a person becomes educated simply to improve the quality of his or her own life – perhaps intellectually, perhaps economically. I don't contend that these aspects are unimportant, but if these are the only reasons, then I believe that you are missing one entire dimension – the dimension of yourself as a social being, as a part of your community. To be an educated person demands that your individual life be informed by a deep sense of community responsibility. It's important that as others have contributed to your education and to your success that you give something of yourself to others. In this respect, I am particularly proud that the

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Kingsborough chapter of Phi Theta Kappa sees civic engagement as one of its primary goals.

Engraved on the tombstone of the American poet Robert Frost are these words by which he wished to be remembered, "I had a lover's quarrel with the world." I hope that as you consider your education see possibilities, encounter risks, and assume responsibility, that you too will have a quarrel with the world. But as you see things in this world that require change, that cry out for change – in your community, in others, and even in your self – have your quarrel be a lover's quarrel. Have your struggle with things as they are come from a compassionate understanding of others, from a considerate respect for other positions and beliefs, and from an even deeper desire to make this world a little better place for all of us to live in!.

Congratulations to you all. Thank you.