

Speech by: Robert Morgan
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ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF MISS LOUISE
WILLIAMS FROM EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY.

I heard somewhere - I can't remember where - the statement, "Bear in mind that children of all ages have one thing in common - they close their ears to advice and open their eyes to example."

Tonight, we pay honor to an example of inspiration, self-sacrifice, dedication, and success, Miss Louise Williams.

My honor and privilege was to be a student of Miss Williams, and I can attest to her prowess as a mathematician for she guided me through the unknown quantities of math 156. I say guided, but more truthfully, prodded and nursed me to an award that means as much to me today as it did then, because I worked as hard for that award as for any honor I have ever attained. My award - a "C".

While I did not reach the highest goal in this course, this is where I first learned to like math because for the first time I understood math. Long before the phrase "generation gap" emerged, Miss Williams had bridged that gap with a personal

relationship to her students that was both warm and rewarding.

Rewarding, particularly to me, for math, among many things, is the art of logical conclusion, and I have applied this same art in the practice of law. By methodical step by step preparation in law, a logical conclusion can be reached. Miss Williams made me a discoverer of this process, and first opened my eyes to the excitement of fitting the puzzle together. This was her gift to me, and a gift I have used all my life.

As a teacher, Miss Williams has recognized that through students, education reaches and serves society as a whole and a teacher's reward is how well her students serve that society. Miss Williams has inspired logical and thoughtful thinking. Her students go forward with this background and on to enlarging their skills of knowledge. This not only contributes to individual betterment but contributes to the advancement of the community, the state, the nation. But that individual must be sparked, nurtured, and challenged - Miss Williams met that challenge.

To her classes she brought the philosophy that the ultimate sin of the mind is the failure to pay attention. And you paid attention in her classes because she commanded the respect of attention.

I acknowledge that the first requisite of any university is a competent dedicated faculty and Miss Williams personifies that description of the faculty of this university, but she has another attribute. She is not just "competent dedicated faculty", she is a competent dedicated teacher, and as a teacher, not just a faculty member, she has passed on to her students the excitement of learning and the privilege of learning, because that is what learning is - a privilege.

Miss Williams could be the scientist that remarked, "The future of our nation depends not so much on what happens in outer space as on what happens in inner space - the space between our ears." Miss Williams helped us fill that void between the ears with clear, logical thinking.