

RED RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUTION

JUNE 25, 2003

By Art DeFehr

Thank you for the honor and the opportunity to share this great event with you....

But this event is about you and your many achievements

Each of you set goals, worked hard and today is the acknowledgement of your hard work and success.

First, let me congratulate you on being here rather than backpacking in Europe or somewhere else – I will not pass judgment on those priorities....since some of my own priorities when I was your age might be remembered.

As you celebrate, remember to include those who worked hard to help you reach this special day – your partner, your friends and most of all your family who will often have dreamed about this day since you were born.

You are also part of an outstanding institution that is highly regarded for its programs and its graduates – and you will add to that legacy with your future accomplishments. Allow me to say something about your community – Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada. You are privileged to live in the greatest country on earth – recognized as such by the United Nations. Quality of life is about many things – but fundamentally it is about the quality of people, how they relate to each other and the opportunities available to each member of that society.

Gambling as represented by the casino is really not my thing. However, we all took part in a lottery – the lottery of life. In this lottery only one of every 200 tickets reads Canada – and only one of every 500 or so says that you could live in Canada and have the competence and opportunity to graduate from College. How many of you would care to throw your lottery ticket back into the pool and pull another one – or even pull 10 other ones and choose from those –but give up the one you have.

On an even more local scale you live in Winnipeg and Manitoba. This is a community that more than most in the world gives respect and opportunity to persons of diverse backgrounds. This community values education, culture and family. It seeks to create conditions that allow you to live in security but also to live out your dreams.

Winnipeg is a City that does not exist by the bounty of nature but by the energy, imagination and determination of its people. We are often asked why Palliser is located in Winnipeg – far from raw materials and markets. My standard answer is because my father happened to live here. Winnipeg has turned out to be a superb location from which to compete in North America.

You live in a community of imaginative entrepreneurs who have built a strong and diverse economy – and now it is your turn to continue to build and to also to give back. My home base has always been in Winnipeg but today my community includes much of the world. Your world can be as large or as local as you wish it to be – but Winnipeg is an outstanding place from which you can enter that larger world.

As you leave you will build your career, relationships and life. Remember that you are part of a community that gave you this special lottery ticket. Remember to put something back into your community, country and the world – and make the lottery tickets that read Winnipeg and Canada the best draw.

This is the end of something and the beginning of much more. Have a great day, a great life and make us all proud.