

Good evening and thank you for this honor,

I want to thank the Shriners for this fantastic facility and their hospitality, and, on a personal note, I want to thank them for my family; they have taken great care of my niece in NC for many years. Thank you, guys!

I also want to thank you for the honor you bestowed on my son Justin. Justin, I am proud of you. As you may see, my family is a Scouting family. My two sons are Eagles, and my wife of 42 years has been by our sides the entire time. Thank you also.

Anyway, when I was asked to speak, I had no idea of what to talk about. My mind runs in 100 different directions, and, as a lot of you know, I usually have my crazy ideas about 2-3 AM.

So this is my organized random thoughts and opinions from an old guy.

I realized that, due to COVID restrictions, most of this class of Eagles did not have the Court of Honor they should have to celebrate their achievement. So from all of us here, Congratulations.

I would like to welcome you all to our Eagle Nest, and, if you did not already, please join NESA.

Well, I made Eagle Scout in 1968 in Troop 350 of Chester, PA. To help ya out, that was in the 3rd quarter of the last century. My Scoutmaster was Mr. Keiser, his assistant Scoutmasters were Mr. Denny, Mr. Bruster, these guys were all WWII veterans. My father was also an assistant Scoutmaster, who was US Army, Medical Corps, in Occupied Germany. Mr. Yoee was a Green Beret, wounded in action in 1967 in Vietnam. He had a '65 Thunderbird two-seater convertible. We could get five of us in the car if we took the top off, to go get burgers from GINO's, guess that's why we have seat belt laws today.

My Senior Patrol Leader was Ronnie Tozzio. My first patrol leader was Bobby Denny of the Apache patrol. Both Eagle Scouts. For us, a week at summer camp cost \$21.00 we paid fifty cents a week.

The reason I tell you this is, these are people I remember, and that helped me, along what was then called, "***the roughed trail to Eagle.***"

I promise when you get older, you will Remember the people who helped you.

At your ceremony, you had a **mentor pin**, and you gave it to someone who is a special person, who helped you along your trail. I remember exactly who gave me mentor pins. Each one is a very special Honor to me, and I would say they are special Honors to every person who ever received one.

Stay in touch with your mentor. Just a simple call once in a while just to say hi.

It took more than just your **mentor** to get you to Eagle. Throughout your Scouting career, endless hours were spent supporting you, from your parents to other leaders, rides to the different events, weekend camping and summer camps. Many people shared life skills, not only in leadership, but also skills from the experiences of the older Scouts and adults. They gave you something more valuable than money; they gave you their time. Remember, **What was given to you is not yours to keep.**

You have to pass on to the next generation to the younger Scouts.

Being an Eagle Scout means you have selected a life of service. Subservient leadership is a good method of leadership, use it.

Put others before yourself.

Remember your **leadership training**. When you go to college or enter the work force, you'll take courses in management, you'll hear about mid-level management, upper-level management, you will learn how to manage a budget, manage your time, and manage your inventory, but always remember, ***You don't manage people, you lead them.***

Your **Scout oath** is everything, keep living by it. "On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my Country." These are simple words, that mean so much. To keep this oath is sometimes harder than you may think, but when you feel things are bad, or too hard to continue, just repeat it again and again. You will find the strength within it, to do what you need to succeed!

Many good people will tell you these simple words of this oath inspired them and kept them going.

You start this oath with "on my **honor**;" in your Eagle Challenge you pledged your Honor. Your Honor is everything, but being an Eagle Scout, it means more. People will expect more from you. Never dishonor yourself or the Eagle Badge, for the legacy and heritage of the Eagle is now yours and to dishonor it will be dishonoring all of us.

You shouldn't have to tell anyone **you're an Eagle Scout**; your actions and words should speak for you. But when asked if you're an Eagle, I promise, you will stand up a little straighter and taller and smile when you say,

"YES I Am."

There are several more things that I want to say to you:

You are growing up in a more complicated world than I did. I don't know what your future holds for you. As my father was **worried about me and my generation**, I am worried about you and your generation.

Be happy! It is easy to fail, and it's easy to blame others for your failing, and it can be habit-forming, but failing isn't fun. Believe me, being successful is a lot more fun.

Be careful with your **social media** posts. Celebrating that 200th friend you have on your posting, you never met, honestly is a 56-year-old guy living in his mom's basement in Milwaukee, whose new hobby is screwing with you.

Not everyone who is friendly is your friend.

Your friends are the Scouts in your units, Scouts you've camped with, hiked with, told stories, and sat around your campfire with.

These are friends.

Also: Being an Eagle Scout, you will be placed in a **leadership position**, and being a leader doesn't make you everyone's friend. You will have to make difficult decisions, and not making a decision, is within itself, a decision.

Life isn't fair, and if someone told you it is, they weren't being fair in telling you that.

Nothing is free, NOTHING. Somewhere, some time, someone will have to pay for it.

Also, Freedom isn't free, there are those among us here, who paid for your freedom. Remember them this weekend, Remember our veterans, as the song says, "for they all gave some, but some gave all."

Our country is ours, and with our Citizenship comes responsibility, take these responsibilities seriously.

Also, if you are ever asked to do a leadership program, such as Wood Badge, do not do it over Mother's Day weekend, all I will say about that.

There is this song that keeps coming to me at night, and I didn't understand why or the importance of it until the other day. I learned it at Bible School; it went something like, "red, yellow, black or white, they are all precious in his sight." We need to realize the children of the world are precious; they are an open sponge absorbing everything. Every time we meet a kid, we leave an impression on their heart, either good or bad, we leave an impression. Kids only know what we teach them. One of Baden-Powell's hopes for Scouting was that it would unify our world; he died thinking he failed because of the outbreak of WWII.

Just a random thought:

Cook for your parents, and then clean up.

Basically just be careful. This country needs you, Scouting needs you, and we need you!

Well, after many, many years, my Scouting trail is now coming closer to an end. My trail is a little easier than before, not as steep as it has been. My trail has been full of emotions, from laughing till I cried, to just crying. So if you come across an old guy on the trail, with his tent along a stream, with his campfire going, and you see that he's a little slower in getting out of his chair, just stop by and say hi.

With that said, Jonathan, Justin, Wes, and the rest of you Eagles, it's now your turn. Take these new Eagles under your wings, it's time to teach them what it means being an Eagle Scout. It's time to teach them to FLY. The fact is some of these New Eagles will be here to help make your sons and, proud to say daughters, become Eagles Scouts too.

The older generation teaching the younger generation.
Just as my generation taught yours.

Well, these are just some life lessons and opinions from the old guy. And as my wife will tell you, I do have an opinion and I feel everyone is entitled to it.

When I was young, it was at the peak of the hippie movement. To get around we just held out our thumb and got a ride. We had dungaree bell bottoms, tie-dye shirts, flower power, peace love dove stuff, and a lot of the best music.

Way back then, I was a trumpet player in the high school band, I was a wrestler (but I won't tell you at what weight class), on the high school wrestling team, I was the troop bugler, and was a Senior Patrol Leader. But today, 53 years later, my resume still reads that:

I am an Eagle Scout.

Thank you again for this honor and allowing me to speak. As a Scout from the hippie days and as Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 350, Chester, PA, I would like to leave you the way we closed our meetings back in the 60s, after our Scoutmaster Minute, I would call the troop together and say:

(peace sign)

“Peace Brothers – and now sisters,
LATER DUDES”