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Rosemarie Howard | University Advancement | 23 June 2007



During a history-making BYU-Hawaii Commencement, 23 June 2007, President Eric B. Shumway was presented with an honorary Doctorate of Human Letters, from the LDS Church Board of Education. ([watch video](#)) In presenting the degree, Elder Richard G. Scott cited the numerous life-long achievements of President Shumway. He ended by saying that President Shumway had served with "spiritual depth and unwavering devotion as a teacher, servant, and friend. His service is always given in kindness," said Elder Scott. "He calms the storms. His faith in Jesus Christ is vibrant.

He is completely dedicated to serving the Lord."

W. Rolfe Kerr, LDS Church Commissioner of Education, then presented President Shumway with a special citation from the Church Board of Trustees, saying, "President Shumway is the closest thing to a father the BYU-Hawaii campus has. He and his wife, Carolyn, have been part of 80 percent of the history of BYU-Hawaii."

"They have been equally yoked in building the university and the kingdom of God," he continued. "Together they epitomize the 'genuine gold' President McKay said the university would produce. He concluded by saying that the Shumways had "provided a marvelous legacy for others to build on in the future."

The Shumways were then presented with a framed version of the citation, along with a bronze statue of President David O. McKay—a gift that President Shumway has often given others. The tributes were capped with a sincere standing ovation from the crowd gathered in the Cannon Activities Center.

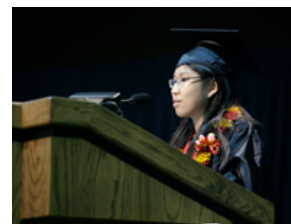
An emotional and heartfelt "Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you!" was Sister Shumway's response to the tributes. President Shumway said that the honor he received was shared by many others who had worked with him through his years of service. He quoted President Hinckley, saying, "When you serve the Lord and He wears you out on one side; He turns you over and wears out the other." He concluded saying, "When we cease serving, we lose the ability to be effective in the world."

Co-valedictorians, Lee and Rainey Address Graduates

Another historical mark in the history of BYU-Hawaii graduations was the announcement of co-valedictorians, Tin Yan Grace Lee, of Hong Kong, and David Rainey, of Boise, ID. Only four preceding times in the history of BYU-Hawaii have there been co-valedictorians: in 1979, 1980, 1982, and 1992.

Both scholars addressed the commencement congregation. Lee began her talk focused on "uncertainties" saying, "Never ask an English major what he is going to do after graduation," which brought a chuckle from some audience members.

She encouraged the graduate to have "negative capability," a term coined by John Keats, meaning a capacity to tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity with equilibrium. "Uncertainties can be opportunities," said Lee. "We must be uncomplaining, humble, and patient and put our faith in Jesus Christ."





David Rainey likened the graduates to the university itself, saying many of them had risen from humble beginnings, just as the university had. He reminded the graduates of President McKay's prophecy that "the world needs men who cannot be bought or sold, men who will scorn to violate truth—genuine gold. That is what this school is going to produce. More than that they will be leaders. Not leaders only in this island, but everywhere. All the world is hungering for them."

Rainey called upon the graduates to remember that they "are called to fulfill a prophecy. Work hard; be true, honest, and faithful. Be genuine."

Elder Scott Encourages Graduates to be Righteous, Effective

Leaders

After degrees were presented to the 266 graduates, Elder Richard G. Scott addressed them. He began by adding his praise for the work the Shumways have done, saying that the honorary degree and citation were well-deserved. He also welcomed the Wheelwrights. "They are well-prepared," said Elder Scott. "The Lord has inspired their appointment. Dr. Wheelwright's presidency at BYU-Hawaii begins at the end of the services today."

He went on to congratulate the students, and said that because they were graduates of BYU-Hawaii they were expected to be righteous, effective leaders. He then gave them some advice "from his heart" to help them live up to this charge.

He encouraged the graduates to use correct principles to govern their lives. "Strength comes from making decisions based on basic truths," said Elder Scott. "Exercise faith," he went on to say. "Challenges are stepping stones to greater achievements."



Elder Scott told the graduates to establish strong families. "Trust in the Lord, follow the commandments, and you'll be filled with inspiration and power," he said. "Obedience brings confidence; confidence brings power."

"Give more than is expected," said Elder Scott. "Average work is not acceptable from a graduate of this institution." He also cautioned the graduates to follow proper traditions, to let go of culture-based traditions that were not righteous. "Put the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ above all other traditions," he said.

Elder Scott concluded his remarks by invoking a blessing on each of the graduates, dependent on their obedience, that the Lord would bless them in making their decisions. He ended by testifying of the reality of Jesus Christ. "He is a real being," said Elder Scott. "He loves you."

([Watch slide show of Commencement 2007 photos.](#))