



**Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet  
Alpha Phi Alpha Inc.,  
Black and Gold Ball  
Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
Admiral Cecil D. Haney  
18 May 2013**

Thank you Alphonso Braggs for that introduction. It is good to see you again. As mentioned, Alphonso and I were shipmates together on USS *Honolulu*. I appreciate the work you have done in the past for our United States Navy. I also am thankful for the work you continue to do today for our youth, our community and our Nation. Thank you.

It's a pleasure to be with you tonight, especially as I am in the presence of greatness. I've always been told that Alpha Phi Alpha was the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity founded for African-Americans in 1906 and that they were the first to integrate a non-black person into the fraternity in 1945.

Today, there are nine such organizations in this group, five fraternities and four sororities. Eight of them modeled their organization after the Alphas. It seems the Alphas are truly the 'first of the firsts'. They were certainly the first of the firsts to ask me to speak and I'm honored.

There's a chant I'm told that the Alphas sing that includes the words: "All of my Love, Peace and Happiness, I'm going to give to Alpha." Although I read it, it would be better if we had a demo ... any Alphas here tonight want to show us how it goes?

Fantastic! Thank you!

I am also aware of this little known fact about this song that perhaps even some here tonight are unaware of. Some of the other fraternities and sororities will sing this same song, but will insert their name at the end of the chant, it makes you wonder who was really 'first' in coming up with this chant. What's ingenious about it is that the Alphas have proven they were the first if you look at the key words. They spell out Alpha.

- All-A,
- of my Love-L,
- Peace-P
- and Happiness-H,
- I'm going to give to Alpha-A.

Of course that spells ALPHA! Wow! You thought well enough to create a song that lets

everyone know who is the first of the first. Now that's smart thinking.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, good evening and Aloha! It is my honor and privilege to be part of this evening's event and to speak on a topic so important and near to my heart.

It is also a great privilege to publically recognize these three outstanding students. Kristin Cook, Alexander Fant and Tyler Stokes, congratulations on earning the prestigious Dr. Ernest J. Harris scholarship. I couldn't be happier for you and your families. (Applause)

I know your moms, dads, families and caretakers must be incredibly proud. Congratulations to each of you as well. You have clearly raised some wonderful children.

Dr. Harris, it is an honor to have you with us tonight. As a highly accomplished scientist and academic, you represent the highest possible level of achievement and success for these scholarship recipients to aspire to. It is great to have your name linked to this scholarship fund. Thank you for your example, your commitment to science and the valuable contributions of your research to the world. (Applause)

Next, let me recognize the Mu Beta Lambda Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity in a slightly different way. President Steve Jones and Vice President James Brown, there's no singing this time guys.

For more than 106 years Alpha Phi Alpha has lived by the principles of 'scholarship, fellowship, good character, and the uplifting of humanity.' Today, Alpha Phi Alpha works nationally to develop leaders, promote brotherhood and academic excellence, and provides service and advocacy for their communities.

These principles are perfectly at home here in Oahu, and the Mu Beta Lambda Chapter has truly embraced the Hawaiian concept of Ohana and Aloha. You have established partnerships with the local March of Dimes, Special Olympics, American Cancer Society and the Fisher House at Tripler Army Hospital. In fact, I learned that you were the number one fundraiser in Hawaii for the March of Dimes this year, raising more than \$9,000. As we say in the Navy "Bravo Zulu". That means well done.

Your members also volunteer to feed the homeless, increase voter registration and are committed to the education of our youth. Can I get the members of Mu Beta Lambda, these professionals, to stand and be recognized? These are the folks working hard to help take care of the people in our community. They have made this night possible. Thank you all for your example and service to our Hawaii Ohana. (Applause)

In today's complex, high tech, globalized world, it is critical that our Nation produces men and women capable of maintaining our intellectual leadership. That is why I am such a big proponent of growing our talent in the STEM fields - the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields. These fields, led by brilliant scientists like Dr. Harris, are driving the innovative breakthroughs and discoveries that are making our world a better place to live and raise our families in.

As the Commander of the Pacific Fleet, I can attest to the importance of investing in the education of our youth. As I look at my Sailors, I rely on their technological and diplomatic skills to operate ships, submarines and aircraft around the world, protecting our Nation's interests abroad.

I also rely on our talented civilian employees because their expertise is essential in supporting our Sailors, designing and maintaining our platforms, and conducting detailed analysis in a variety of critical areas.

The United States Navy also recognizes just how important it is to invest in the education and well being of our Navy families, the spouses and the children because we know that they can help strengthen our Nation now and in the future.

As the product of the Washington, D.C., public school system, I appreciate the value of a good education. I remain convinced that the education of our Nation's entire population is important to our National security and our economic prosperity and viability. We must continue to lead in education including the STEM fields if we are to remain the world leader in innovation, and our youth hold that key.

I am encouraged to see bright minds eager to go to college so they can succeed and help the United States of America well into the future. That is part of why I am so honored to be here tonight. The three scholarships just awarded are helping strengthen our community and our Nation.

In just a few weeks Kristin, Alexander and Tyler will be donning their graduation attire and walking across the stage to accept their diplomas. Kristin; Alexander, and Tyler, you must be excited about all of this. How electrifying it must be to be graduating from high school and headed to college! As high school ends and you prepare to start college, you are finishing one important journey and beginning another.

Through high school, your path to success was clear, you knew what was expected of you, you knew what your schedule was, you even knew the date you would graduate, years in

advance. But your journey though college is much less structured. Now you will be able to make your own choices and have greater freedom to plan out and direct your own destiny.

You will also have to navigate through some rough seas as you face new and unexpected challenges and pitfalls. You will have to juggle your demanding course load while maintaining high academic standards.

Of course there will be distractions. The challenges of living on your own for the first time, sports activities and other extracurricular activities, parties and even dating.

Hmmm, I just saw some of the smiles from the parents fade.

I'm telling you this so that you understand that while your college experience should be fun, let there be no doubt it is challenging, it takes discipline, a questioning attitude, focus and lots of hard work.

But remember you have all the tools it takes to be successful. Stay excited about a life of continuous learning. Know that the team back here is here to support you. Keep us in your network of support. Know that we are cheering from the bleachers for you!

The great professionals of Mu Beta Lambda have recognized you as standouts by awarding you the Dr. Ernest J. Harris scholarship. This wasn't awarded just because of what you have done in the past, but because of what they believe you can do in the future. President John F. Kennedy once said, "To those whom much is given, much is expected." Everyone here tonight believes in you. Take your studies seriously, do your best and I know you will do great things.

As I conclude, since I am a nuclear-trained submariner, I want to leave you with this quote from the father of our nuclear Navy, Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, a man who certainly believed in the importance of higher education. He said: "I believe it is the duty of each of us to act as if the fate of the world depended on him (or her). Admittedly, one man (person) by himself cannot do the job. However, one man (person) can make a difference. We must live for the future of the human race and not for our own comfort or success."

I challenge you to take what you will learn and give back to your community and your Country. No matter what career you choose or where life takes you, make sure you pay it forward. Ten or 20 years from now, as you look back on this night, will you be part of the process that is giving back to the next generation? Will you be involved in educating and mentoring the youth of our Nation, and in turn, strengthening our Country? I know that we

can count on Mu Beta Lambda and Alpha Phi Alpha to do their part. My hope is that all of us will answer the call.

Life's journey is about taking advantage of opportunities. Having traveled abroad for many of the 34 years of my Navy career, I can attest to just the grand opportunities our grateful Nation provides. Opportunities that are not restricted to one specific class, gender, or race. So, let us all continue to be examples to these three and support them as they take advantage of opportunities before them.

Now I know we have the dance floor scheduled here in just a few minutes and if I don't get away from the podium they might just start the music before I finish, so I'll end this. Thank you all for the opportunity to join you here tonight and I pray that Alpha Phi Alpha will continue its great work. I wish each and everyone here nothing but the best.

May God continue to bless our Nation, our armed services and each of you as we strive to make the United States of America, and the world, a better place.

Mahalo Nui Loa and thank you.