"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."

James 1:2-3

The Southwest Baptist University family has persevered through many challenges during its 132-year history. A study of the history of our University would show that many times in our history, the future of SBU appeared to be very grim. The only reason we are here today is because men and women of faith have answered God's call to serve at SBU. We have persevered through many trials down through the decades. Today, I consider it a joy to work at SBU and to be a member of the SBU family and part of a University that has survived many challenges.

It is very gratifying to recognize our accomplishments and to declare that last year, the 2009-2010 academic year, was a very successful year. But at the same time we compliment ourselves, we must recognize that we face numerous challenges. We must be prepared to deal with a myriad of challenges during this current year and in future years.

Every day we must remind ourselves that *"Southwest Baptist University is a Christ-centered, caring academic community preparing students to be servant leaders in a global society."* If we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and if we continue to focus on our mission statement, we will meet our challenges and we will continue to do great things for the Kingdom of God.

For the past fourteen years, I have been fortunate to work here at SBU. It is humbling to know that I have been president of SBU longer than any other president in our 132-year history. We have an outstanding University! We have great colleagues who genuinely care about each other. Twenty-two people from SBU chose to make the long trip to Kentucky for my father's recent visitation and funeral. That kind of love and loyalty fully demonstrates the word "caring" in our mission statement. The flowers and cards, emails and text messages sent from the SBU family, including Board members, donors and friends of the University, are so meaningful. This demonstration of love for me and my family is inspiring and increases the passion I have for our University.

During the final hours I spent with my father, I thought a lot about legacy. What do we want our legacy at SBU to be? We certainly desire for SBU to be better than it was when we started. We want SBU to get better every year.

Buildings are important and I am proud of the capital improvements we have made during the past fourteen years. We have better facilities today than we have had in the past. Buildings and good facilities are important and we have spent a significant amount of time fundraising to make capital improvements. I also am pleased with the growth of our endowment – from approximately $4,500,000 fourteen years ago to more than $18,000,000 today.

However, I believe the legacy all of us want to leave deals directly with our calling, which is to graduate students who are prepared to be servant leaders in a global society. Our calling is all about mission and students. We build and renovate buildings to enhance our ability to meet our mission with our students. We desire to increase the endowment so we can ensure that we can fulfill our mission for years to come. We want to improve the work environment so all of us can be better prepared to influence our students, and to prepare them to make a difference for the Kingdom.

Everything we do should point to our students, past, present, and future. Our current students, our graduates, and how we have influenced them is our legacy. Our most significant accomplishment over the past fourteen years is the 11,337 degrees awarded!

We truly are blessed at SBU. Because of your support and the Lord's blessing, our University continues to fulfill our mission of graduating students who are prepared to be servant leaders in a global society.

C. Pat Taylor
President