



Celebration of Excellence 2024

President George Hanbury • Nova Southeastern University (NSU)

Closing Remarks: **“What’s Your Purpose”**

Since this is my last Celebration of Excellence as president of this great University, I would like to say a few words – a few serious words – in closing tonight.

People who find their purpose in life, and follow their passion, give their lives meaning. It’s called the hidden power of purpose, and it helps all of us to be energized and live longer, healthier, and happier lives.

You see, it’s even been proven by science that the mind and the body are inseparable aspects of our existence. Or, as my mama used to say, “you’re only as old as you think you are,” and, until the day she died, she had the energy and enthusiasm of an 18-year-old.

I found my purpose on November 22, 1963, during my junior year in college, when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. His lingering words of admonition resonated with me after his death even more than when he actually stated them during his inauguration: “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.”

These words, when combined with the loss and tragedy of his assassination, inspired and energized millions of young Americans like me to answer his call and enter the noble career of public service – mine for 30 years as a city manager, helping to build and redevelop four major cities.

Then, for the past 26 years of my career at NSU, I found a new purpose which I feel is the most noble thing I have ever done – encouraging and helping young women and men achieve their academic dreams and goals, while providing an environment to assist and support them as they unleash their potential to become leaders.

Demonstrating our love for NSU, you witnessed my wife, Jana, and me receiving an NSU Shark Circle Donor Award this evening for philanthropic contributions totaling one million dollars or more.

We were able to provide such a large sum of funds solely because we participated in NSU's payroll deduction plan. Over the last 26 years, Jana and I have been able to give and pledge more than \$1 million used to establish two scholarships, one in her name and one in mine, and both for students in academic disciplines emphasizing service to others – students who want to make this world, not only greater and better, but also more beautiful.

Through the video shown earlier tonight, you all saw how Albert Miniaci and the late Joel Hochberg teamed up as visionary philanthropists to help create and fund NSU's Razor's Edge program, providing scholarships and enriched learning opportunities for our undergraduate students.

These two found the hidden power of their purpose, which not only enriched their own lives, but enriched the lives of thousands of others, and all while giving meaning to life itself.

My question is now to you: Have you found your purpose?

If you have, then God bless. But if you haven't, I hope Albert and Joel's story has inspired you to find your purpose through helping young people, as these two men made an impact on thousands through so directing their time, their talent, and their treasures.

I assure you, such actions will bring greater rewards to you than the investments you make. It will give your life new meaning as you can start to feel that you are, indeed, making this world a better place.

Or as Winston Churchill said, "You make a living by what you get, but you make a life, a wonderful life, by what you give!"