

EARLHAM COLLEGE: PURPOSE AND PASSION—AND GENEROSITY

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Good evening. It is very good to be with you tonight. Among us are many of Earlham's best friends and strongest supporters. I want to thank you all for being here.

I was not fortunate enough to go to Earlham – unlike many of you. Tonight I want to tell you some things I have learned about Earlham. These are things I have learned at Earlham over these past eleven years as Earlham's President.

One thing I have learned (and maybe it's the most important thing) is that Earlham has a passion for learning. Earlham faculty have that passion and Earlham students have that passion. In any classroom at any time of day (and remember sometimes our classrooms are out of doors or thousands of miles away from here, or out of doors and thousands of miles away from here) you can feel the excitement, sense the engagement.

Another thing I have learned is that Earlham has a passion for improving the world. Every day I see that in our alumni, and in our students, even from their very first days on campus. Last night I was exchanging some e-mail with a first-year who doesn't think we have begun to do enough for sustainability at Earlham. I know she brought that concern with her to Earlham. But we had a speaker at Convocation this week who sketched a road to a carbon-free, nuclear-free future, and this gave her fresh energy. She shared her sense of urgency with me.

We are not a not a knowledge for knowledge's sake kind of college. We can delight in intellectual play or creativity, but running through the Earlham heart are purposes for knowledge, purposes that involve healing, justice seeking, teaching, protecting and discovering.

For many of us, this passion for improving the world grows out of our Quaker grounding. Others draw their values and purposes in other religious traditions or understandings of human potential. For all of us, Earlham is awash in good purposes: more so than any other place I have experienced.

But yet another thing I have learned about Earlham is that Earlham is fragile. We dare to be a small college so that we can educate more personally, and thus more profoundly. On a relatively small foundation, with relatively modest resources, we deliver uncommon educational value.

Put another way, I have learned that we are an effective institution. Trust us with a dollar and we will make it go a very long way. We must take care – each of us – with this very distinctive, very effective college. Shaped by Earlham, each of us has a responsibility to see that this college endures, to see that others have the opportunities that we have had.

And a fourth thing I have learned is that Earlham is a generous community. Each of you knows this. At the center of every Earlhamite's reconnection to the college is a powerful, enduring relationship with some member of the faculty – or two or three or four. A few years, Ellen and I asked a group of seniors to name the person who had made the most substantial contribution to their education. One young woman named one of her Earlham professors, then another, then another. We stopped her at nine, and I am sure she wasn't finished.

Earlham professors take care with our students when they struggle. Talk to them in their offices, show up for their soccer games and concerts. Write comments on their papers that may be longer than the paper itself. Assure them that they know they can do the work. Praise them when they do. And when Earlham students are flying high, feeling pretty good about themselves, Earlham professors compel our students to do even better. Set new challenges before them. Let them know they have yet more potential within them that they have not yet unlocked or unleashed.

This kind of personal attention is commonplace at Earlham. It is an Earlham signature. It is manifest generosity. I don't believe there is any profession that so much embodies generosity as teaching. Each and every one of Earlham's faculty could have made different choices about their lives. They could be lawyers or doctors or bankers. They could have chosen to be a professor at a research university. No doubt with those different choices many could have earned more money or gained greater renown. But they chose to teach at Earlham, and that is a choice that embodies generosity.

Earlham's generosity can be seen in many other ways. It can be seen in the mutual aid we extend one another in the wider Earlham community when someone is sick or need. We can see it in the choices of vocations of Earlham graduates – vocations that often involve service to others. We can see it in the financial aid we offer to make an Earlham education accessible to many, many students from low and moderate income families.

I have seen this generosity in all of you. You are here tonight because you have supported Earlham. I want to thank you for that generosity.

But I have also learned that Earlham is a little shy about money. Money is an awkward subject in the Earlham world. We seem more comfortable in being generous in giving our time and our talents. We are gathered here tonight because we must not be shy about money if we are to continue to have Earlham endure as a place with passion for learning yoked to a passion for improving the world.

Tomorrow we will announce a comprehensive campaign whose basic purpose is to build a sturdier foundation for Earlham to continue to do what Earlham does so well: to invite students to learn, with an eye to putting their learning in service to improving the world – a world that this week needs all the help we can give it.

We have five main objectives in this campaign.

First, we seek endowment resources to support our extraordinary faculty. We want to strengthen their compensation, and, just as important, we want to provide resources for their continued professional development.

Second, we seek resources to build a new arts building and to renovate some of our current, tired arts facilities. The arts have come of age at Earlham over the past decade or two. I hope this weekend you will look at the works of art of recent Earlham graduates in Leeds Gallery. And I hope some of you will hear the orchestra and chorus tomorrow evening. This generation of Earlham students has passion and talent for the arts. The wonder is that they do so much and do so well in the physical facilities they currently have. We need facilities that are worthy of what they do.

Third, we seek resources to build a new science building. From the college's very beginning, science has been an Earlham strength. Joseph Moore. Alumni discoveries and innovations based in scientific research. A Nobel Prize or two. An astonishing record of sending our graduates on to earn Ph.D.s in the sciences, decade after decade. And yet. And yet, we have not built a new science building for thirty-five years. (This is part of what I mean in saying we are a fragile institution.) We cannot hope to sustain our excellence in science education if we do not provide up-to-date science facilities.

Fourth, we need to refocus the library, to make it better suited to an era of networked, digital information. For several decades, Earlham has been a praised pioneer in library circles. We have taught other colleges and universities how to make the best use of libraries in their learning. Our librarians model intellectual generosity for all of us in their passion to help their faculty colleagues be yet more effective teachers. To sustain this strength, we need to invest in the library.

And fifth, we seek additional endowment for financial aid to continue making an Earlham education accessible, genuinely accessible, to students from low and moderate income families – from this country and from countries around the world. In our generosity, we provide a great deal of financial aid: last year, more than \$17 million dollars, and more every year. We must not let that financial aid diminish what we can pay our faculty. Quality and access must go hand in hand. One must not crowd out the other.

Support for faculty. Arts facilities. A Science building. Refashioning the library for the digital age. And endowment for financial aid. These are the goals of the campaign we will announce tomorrow.

Why is this campaign important? Because Earlham is important, and because Earlham is one of a kind.

Speaking of generosity. One of Earlham's best friends is not with us tonight, though I am sure he is here in spirit. I am speaking of John Loose. A member of the Board of Trustees, John is the chair of our campaign. We should all credit him with a great deal of the success we have already had in this campaign. He has been generous with his time. He has

been generous with his leadership. John and Jane Loose have given Earlham more money than any other individual donor other than Eli Lilly.

John has some words for us tonight, which he recently taped in New York City where he is recovering from surgery on his back. Here's what John has to say to us.

JOHN LOOSE VIDEO

I want to show you another video, one that I think captures the special qualities of Earlham that John Loose articulates so well. John has told you why Earlham matters to him. Here are some more people telling us why Earlham matters to them. I hope this voices some of your connection to Earlham. And I think most of you will see some friends.

VIDEO: "I AM...."

CONCERT CHOIR: "HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING"

Indeed. How can we keep from singing?

Last June, the Earlham Board of Trustees set a goal for this comprehensive campaign: a goal that would allow us to do the five things I outlined as campaign goals.

\$60 million dollars: that was the goal the Board set.

How are we doing so far? We have been talking to some of Earlham's best friends over the past three years about this campaign. Many of you are here with us tonight. I am delighted to say that we have already raised over \$41 million towards that goal. This campaign is already the most successful campaign Earlham has ever mounted. But we still have a long way to go.

Given the last week, the road just got a little rougher. But the college's needs didn't diminish. And perhaps this country and world came to need what Earlham offers even a little more. So we will just have to try harder.

I want to thank all of you who have made gifts and pledges to this campaign. Your generosity speaks right from Earlham's heart.

I hope you will join us for lunch tomorrow on campus, in the Performance Gym, for the public announcement of the campaign. Join us as we challenge others to match your generosity.

Thank you for joining us tonight.