

Excerpts from Remarks at the Silver Taps Ceremony, April 16, 2009

Tarleton is a university that celebrates its traditions with uncommon respect and pride. From the beautiful rock gates to the cheers of the Plow Boys and the antics of the Purple Poo, our traditions are the connective tissue that binds our past to the future.

In the fall, we welcome the entering class with a candle-lighting ceremony. This year -- my first -- was memorable with one of those beautiful "Tarleton purple" sunsets. Students pledged their commitment to integrity, diversity, and civility. That evening, our newest students were embraced by Tarleton tradition and began their journey of challenge, discovery, friendship, and opportunity.



As we look upon the candles held by family, friends, and students tonight, we should reflect on the words from the freshman candle lighting ceremony:

"Your flame will burn with those of others of this great brotherhood and sisterhood until your life is finished and your Tarleton brothers and sisters lay your flame to rest."



Tonight we complete what was started with the lighting of candles. We lay to rest the flames of many dearly beloved members of the Tarleton family.

It is no accident that we use the language of family to describe our relationships at Tarleton. This is, indeed, a family. As family, we encourage, support and, yes, prod one another to do better for ourselves and our communities. We look on with satisfaction as students, faculty, and staff achieve success on campus and beyond. Once students become graduates, we follow their accomplishments with great interest and pride. Like parents, we wish our graduates would stay in closer

contact with us and visit their Tarleton "home" more. . .

As a family, we mourn the loss of sisters and brothers of Tarleton. And while we cannot truly know the pain of parents, spouses, relatives, and friends, together we can celebrate the lives and legacy of those departed.

This is a day of thanks and remembrance and of reflection and rededication. This day reminds us to live gratefully. To look carefully. To listen intently. To learn constantly. To laugh heartily. To love unconditionally. And to recall joyously those we honor tonight.

In the next few moments as we hear the melancholy strains of “Taps,” as we listen to those 24 notes that touch our hearts, we complete a circle started with the lighting of a candle and say to these sons and daughters of Tarleton:

Your flame has burned brightly with those
of this great brotherhood and sisterhood.
Tonight we remember you
and lay your flame to rest.