

# **Class of 2017 White Coat Ceremony OHSU School of Medicine**

**Remarks by Jay Waldron, Ph.D., J.D., OHSU Board of Directors**

**August 16, 2013**

Good Afternoon,

I am a lawyer here in Portland. I'm not here in my professional role, but as a representative of the OHSU Board of Directors. I have had the good fortune to serve in that role for 6 years and no volunteer opportunity has been as gratifying as helping guide this great institution.

Let me begin by saying congratulations to all of you. Congratulations on your academic accomplishments and congratulations to your families for the support they have given you through the years.

You could not have chosen a better place to receive your education.

For more than 100 years, OHSU has been dedicated to providing an outstanding educational experience with the goal of graduating dentists, physicians, nurses and scientists who are well prepared to serve the health care needs of Oregon, the Pacific Northwest and the nation.

Your journey has been challenging. You have sacrificed a lot to get to where you are today. And, no doubt, you will make many more sacrifices in the course of your medical education in order to reach your lofty goals.

But I don't want to talk about sacrifice today. I want to talk about fun.

More years ago than I care to remember, I was a third-year law student at the University of Virginia and gave the welcoming speech to the incoming law students.

If any of you know that part of the country, you know that some of the most spectacular scenery in America is the fall foliage in the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains. I asked the incoming law students to make sure they got out of the law library and took the time to go out and enjoy that magnificent scenery. That school was just as much about happiness and personal growth as it was about achievement.

The Dean was mortified.

Several years later, a law student interviewed at our firm and told me he took my advice and it was what he remembered most about his first year. This was repeated some 20 years later when I met a lawyer back East in a case and he commented that he took my advice to heart and kept law school in perspective, and spent as much time figuring out what part of the law he enjoyed as he did getting good grades.

When I attended University of Virginia law school, the goal of many of the students and the law school culture was to get a well-paying job with a big firm in New York, D.C. or Boston. Through a federal clerkship, I chose a different path and ended up in Portland primarily because I wanted to ski and practice law.

I am old enough to have attended my 35<sup>th</sup> reunion. When you talk to classmates at those later-in-life affairs, there is absolutely no difference in the happiness, satisfaction quotient, or even the bragging between the Wall Street lawyers, the country lawyers, the academics, or the legal aid practitioners. In short, they had pursued their passions and what makes them happy – and that had made all the difference.

I strongly suspect that incoming med students are every bit as competitive and achievement oriented as incoming law students. So: same advice today as years ago: Listen to your heart. Choose your passion. And don't forget to have fun.

I promise if you do, that at your 35<sup>th</sup> reunion you will feel accomplished in your career whether it's been conquering cancer, practicing family medicine in a small town, or a volunteer at a clinic for the underserved.

Hopefully, this is the last advice you will need from an lawyer. See you all in 2017.