

RISE UP & DO BETTER

Aging in the 21st Century

Some thoughts from Mary L. Flett, Ph.D.
Eisenhower Class of 1975

Then and Now . . .

- Thank you -
- Proud to be the premier act - Janet's performance
- Arrived in Seneca Falls in August, 1971



Mary L. Flett, circa 1973

Then and Now

- Charter Class
- Phase I, II, III (Tuscarora, Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida)
- Unfinished buildings – unfinished dreams
- Eisenhower for C+ students (Scott Skinner)
- First semester 4.0 – Second semester 1.6

Then and Now

- Discovered Deerhead
- Eventually graduated with a 3.2 (I think)
- Remember one graduation speaker starting with , “Some graduate magna cum laude. Some graduate Summa cum laude. I graduated Thank the Laude”

Then and Now . . .

- Did some calculating. In 1971 . . .
 - *Joe Coffee was 53*
 - *Warren Hickman was 50*
 - *Jamie Campbell was 36*
 - *Warren Blackstone was 31*
 - *Ed Demers was the old man at 51*
 - *Ed Hosley was 40, Al Ossman 44, and Renee Schoen-Rene 41*
 - *Bill Kerr was 48*
 - *Troisi was just a kid and Sue Savageau wasn't out of diapers . . .*

Legacy . . .

I wonder if they understood the totality of their impact on us?

Legacy . . .

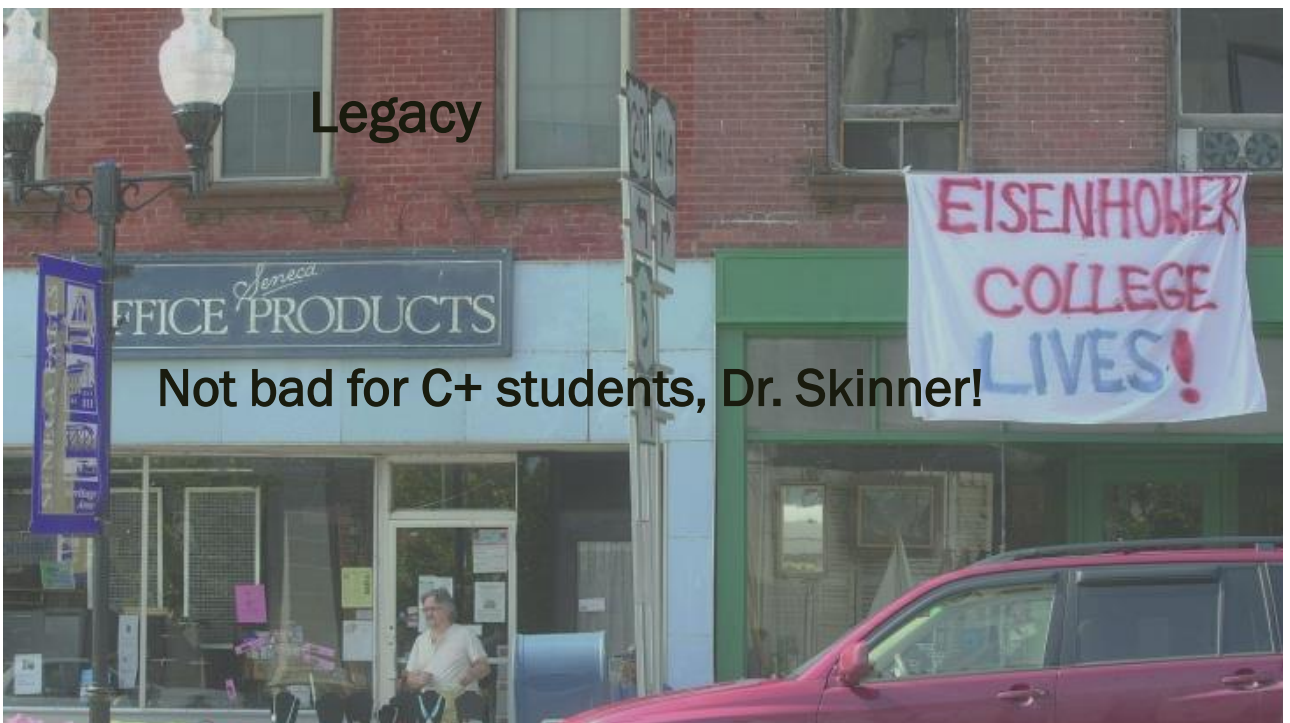
- Eisenhower graduates have gone on to
 - *Board rooms*
 - *Class rooms*
 - *Examination rooms*
 - *Court rooms*

Legacy . . .

- Eisenhower graduates have become
 - *Professors*
 - *Physicians/Psychologists*
 - *Clergy*
 - *Actors*
 - *Authors*
 - *Bankers*

Legacy . . .

- Eisenhower graduates have occupied positions in
 - *Congress*
 - *Foreign Consulates*
 - *Navy, Army, Air Force, Marine, and Coasties!*



Putting into Perspective . . .

- Here we are today. The Boomer's. Retired.
- Our memories are faulty, hair is falling out or gone, eyesight is bad.
- Quite a few of us have faced challenges – physical, emotional, psychological, financial.
- What is required of us now? Time we rise up and do better.

Aging in the 21st Century

- We're going to do an exercise now. Find a piece of paper and a writing implement.
 - *“Okay – everybody ready? For the next 60 seconds, write down every word you associate with the term, “old”.*

 - *“Okay. Stop. Turn that page over. Now write down every word you associate with the term “elder”.*

- Which list is longer?
- Which list has a negative slant to it?
- Are you surprised by your answers?

Aging in the 21st Century

Four questions to consider . . .

1. Who is that in the mirror?
2. How do I embrace the shift?
3. How do I transition from “doing” to “being”
4. What does “enough” mean?

Who is this that in the mirror?

- *Who were your role models for growing old?*
- *Who do you compare yourself with now?*
- *What kind of a role model have you become?*

Who influenced you most at lke?

- Professors
- Staff
- Fellow Students
- Strangers
- Other

Who have you influenced you since graduation? How?

- Family
- Co-Workers
- Fellow Students
- Strangers
- Other

Embracing the Shift

- What is shifting now that I am older?
 - *External and internal*
 - *Changes in physical, emotional, cognitive*
 - *Downsizing*
 - *Adapting and accommodating*
 - *Role changes*

Rank the following in terms of their importance to you when you were at Ike:

- physical condition
- cognitive functioning
- financial concerns
- concerns about family
- finding purpose and meaning

Rank the following in terms of their importance to you today:

- physical condition
- cognitive functioning
- financial concerns
- concerns about family
- finding purpose and meaning

Transitioning from “doing” to “being”

- Transitions
 - *What does “retirement” mean?*
 - *3rd career*
 - *Caregiving, caregiver*
 - *Being cared for*
 - *Creating a place for being a wise elder in yourself and your community*
 - *Legacy building*

I am . . .

- Still working because I want to
- Still working because I have to
- Not working because I got laid off/furloughed (unwilling unemployment)
- Happily retired (because I wanted to)
- Reluctantly retired (due to age, disability or no choice of your own)
- Other

I am caring for (or responsible for) ...

- myself
- children
- partner/spouse
- parent
- extended family member
- other

What does “enough” mean

- I am enough – self-worth/self-appreciation
- I have enough – financial as well as emotional
- There is enough - sufficiency
- That is good enough - acceptance

	Not Enough	Enough	More Than Enough
Financial security			
Social engagement			
Physical health			
Purpose & Meaning			
Time			
Stuff			

Elder-Friendly Communities – an Ideal

1. **Housing:** *The right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. It should be ensured to all persons irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*
2. **Healthcare:** *Access to providers, suppliers, and facilities that address prevention and preserve quality of life irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*
3. **Transportation:** *Public/private systems to insure access (disability) and frequency, as well as geographic sufficiency irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*
4. **Nutrition:** *Access to fresh, nutritious meals on a daily basis, irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*
5. **Employment:** *Opportunities to continue to earn a living either through full-time and/or part-time work. Opportunities to continue to contribute to the economy and development of the workforce through mentoring, supervising, and/or entrepreneurship.*

Elder-Friendly Communities – an Ideal

6. **Recreation:** *Access to a variety of local activities and locations that provide relaxation, enjoyment and physical engagement. Handicap accessible. Locations in nature (e.g., parks, beaches, forests) and facilities (e.g., gyms, pools, wellness centers) irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*
7. **Spiritual Needs:** *Access to faith-based communities, programs, and information on end-of life concerns, purpose and meaning in life, and religious/spiritual activities, spiritual guidance and counseling provided by trained members of clergy or lay members.*
8. **Arts:** *Attendance at, involvement with, participation in, and enjoyment of all forms of artistic expression, including traditional arts practiced by diverse peoples, irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*

Elder-Friendly Communities – an Ideal

9. **Life-long Learning:** *Learning arising from a desire to develop personal skills, talents, and desires, as well as discovery, incubation, and harnessing of creative potential of all individuals across the lifespan, irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*
10. **Inter-generational Collaboration:** *Opportunities for cross-generational activities Opportunities for shared care (e.g., young adults providing services to elders; elders providing day-care to children); ageism intentionally addressed through education and opportunities for inter-generational teaching, irrespective of income or access to economic resources.*

Final thoughts . . .

- We are creating a new definition of aging
- We will live longer than our parents and grandparents, and sadly, our children and grandchildren
- We can create a legacy of values or leave a legacy of problems
- Action is called for
- Share your wisdom and knowledge

Confront the difficult while it
is still easy – Lao Tsu

Thank you

- And now – back to Nancy and Janet!