



## 72 -22 Golden Legacy Keynote Address

By RADM Robert F. Duncan '72

*Intended to be delivered at the Golden Legacy Ceremony last Spring (2020)*

Good evening:

Admiral & Mrs Kelly, Distinguished guests, classmates, and especially the Class of 2022

It is my distinct honor to address you this evening, on this important milestone, on behalf of the Great Class of 1972.

We arrived in New London and were subsequently sworn-in 355 strong. I say "strong" but I recall the dominant feeling was "nervous and uncertain". We graduated 177. We went to sea. And the rest is history.

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Actually, quite a lot of history.

Through wars and peace, and howling gales, and at least one Perfect Storm - which was made into a blockbuster Hollywood movie of that name, featuring heroic Coast Guard rescues - led by our classmate-, and a few pretty impressive hurricanes;

from Aztec shore to Arctic zone, to Europe and Far East, and some action in the Middle East during DESERT STORM. We were there. Oh, and Outer Space as well - traveled by our classmate; the 1st CG astronaut!.

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That nervous line of cadet-candidates passing into Chase Hall went on to make major contributions in all of those areas and many more.

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Some stayed a few years; others completed full careers; all were, and are, valued classmates.

Whenever we separated from active duty, we took our values, which are at the heart of Coast Guard culture, and applied them to our chosen follow-on professions.

We have in our ranks today:

one MD, one dentist, several C-level executives, and, yes, a few lawyers (it happens!). Senior engineers of every discipline, consultants, leadership coaches, elected and appointed, and serving government officials, (federal, state, and local), commercial pilots, small business owners (one owns a string of car washes!), various visionaries ( one created the Alaska Maritime Exchange; extending essential maritime services across an under-served, remote, and unforgiving region)

and a distinguished professor of optical physics - whom I pretend to understand.

As we meet here this evening, one of my classmates is 'standing the watch' as Master of a maritime pre-position ship in Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean.

I would also like to point out that, as a group, we have amassed a most impressive portfolio of volunteer community and professional service. Service is part of our DNA; and of yours as well!!! You have demonstrated that already.

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The 1st piece of writing that we encountered, after entering Chase Hall, said "Who lives here reveres Honor, Honors Duty". I believe we did; and do. We were privileged to have had our hand on the helm of a magnificent institution through the last 30 years of the 20th century and to help chart its course into the current century ( the last of our class retired from active duty on 9 June 2006; that was me!). We proudly added classmate's names to the Academy's Wall of Valor, and quietly assisted our countrymen in times of great personal and community need; most often noted only by those in need. A simple 'thank you' was our most meaningful reward.

Along the way we laughed, we loved, endured hardship and sorrows, we comforted each other in times of grief, and celebrated accomplishments,

and we raised terrific families, as partners with loving spouses who put up with a lot {believe me!}, with the values that allowed each of us to achieve great things across every sector of our society, as that incomplete listing I just read attests. And we, as a Class, remain good friends, today. Not bad for a first chapter of Life.

You have learned the value of teamwork and are learning effective leadership.\*\*

You have discovered, as we did, that your personal limits, both physical and mental, are well beyond what you had imagined.

And you have formed bonds with your classmates that will serve you a lifetime. Trust me.

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Today we symbolically transfer some of our DNA, as a class , to you through a golden flow admixed to your class rings. But you should appreciate that this transfer is also quite real. The Class of 72 - the WHOLE Class of '72 - stands with you as you write your own history of challenges met and great achievements. As was true for '72, you can not truly begin to imagine those challenges tonight.

{ I could not imagine iPhones - or LORAN-C  
But I'd bet our classmate physics professor had an idea!}

But rest assured, the skills you learn here and the values you share with my class, as indeed with the entire Long Blue Line, will set you on the proper course to achieve great things.

And one evening just about 50 years from tonight, one of you will be relating those thoughts from this podium to another group of cadets linked to that chain. Like this evening, it will be an evening worth coming back for!

Semper Paratus , Go Bears!

and Go 2022!

*\*\* Admiral Loy wrote a good book on that subject , with a '72 connection, I hope you read it!!*