**14822, Muhammad Ibrahim**

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| Good Evening (or afternoon) Students,  “Learn all you can learn, for no one can take that away from you.” That’s the lesson a mother taught her children many years ago. Even a generation ago education was not obtained easily. Many people who didn’t receive an education didn’t value education so they didn’t pass along the importance of an education to their children. Some even held their children back from gaining a better education. But, some saw the value of an education in others and made certain that their children had the chance for a better education than they received.  As our world moves forward, education has become even more important to all of us. If we look at countries where it is difficult to earn an education, we can see clearly that the people there do not prosper. People without an education have no choice but to remain as they were, without choices or without hope for a better life. But, those who are offered the chance to learn soon find out that having an education makes all the difference. Education opens up new worlds to us. When we go to school and learn everything possible, then we gain new tools both to survive now and to thrive in the future. The more education a person has, the better chance they have for earning a higher income. The more education a person has, the better chance they have for living a better life, live in a safer, nicer, neighborhood, maybe even have a better position in society.  Neil Armstrong grew up in a Wapakoneta, Ohio. But, he went to college and earned advanced degrees. After college he became an astronaut and the first person to walk on the Moon. He also worked as an aerospace engineer, a naval aviator, a test pilot and a university professor.  There is a museum in his home town in his honor. By persevering and earning an education he was able to choose his life’s course and leave a legacy for his children and the whole world.  Dr. Martin Luther King grew up in a time of strong racism, where most Blacks didn’t have the chance for having a better life. But, he worked hard and earned an education and became a great leader who promoted peaceful and positive behavior while standing firm for one’s beliefs. |  |

There are just as many women how have used their education to leave a legacy for their families and the world at large. It used to be common for women to stop their education at a younger age than men because they were expected to learn how to be homemakers, wives and mothers. But, there have always been women who went against the accepted rules of society to become all they could become. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman to graduate from medical school in the United States in 1849. Rebecca Lee Crumpler was the first African American female physician in the United States in 1864. Arabella Mansfield was the first woman admitted to the bar of Iowa in 1869.

Earning an education throws wide the vistas before you. Without an education you have only low wage, manual labor jobs available to you. But, the more education you earn, the greater your chances of earning a better living. Earning an education gives you choices in life. The question is no longer, when will I start work at the grocery store or the factory or the call center? No, when you earn an education the question becomes, what sort of job do I want to work? Do I want to be a teacher or a scientist? Do I want to be a computer programmer or a doctor? The sky is the limit, your only boundaries being your skills and the funding. Funding can be overcome with scholarships, grants, and loans.

It has been said that if you do what you love you will never work a day in your life. So, discovering your passion is the combination of your skills and your desires. If you are a musician would you rather teach, perform, write music or direct music, or maybe a combination of all of them. If you are an English major, do you want to teach, become a published author or write for businesses? Regardless of your skills and talents, there are a variety of choices available to you if you earn the required education.

Was education valued in your family? Did they encourage you to further your studies or tell you to quit wasting your time? What do you want for your children? Do you want them to stay within the same confines where you have lived? Or do you want more for them? Do you want to just continue on in your family’s business, if there is one? Or would you rather strike out on your own and do something totally unique for you?

Earning an education gives you a chance to leave a legacy. If your family worked whatever jobs were available and changed when the jobs changed, never questioning what they did, what kind of legacy is that? If your family had an established legacy such as business or law or medicine, is that the same legacy you want to leave? Or do you want to forge your own way. Maybe they were lawyers but you want to be a writer. Which will you do?

You have your lives before you. The opportunities are endless, if you will open your eyes to the possibilities. Allow yourselves to dream. Think about what you really want to do with your life. Then seek out the counsel of those who have done what you want to do and discover how to get from where you are today to where you want to be. Seek out the best schools for what you want to learn, whether it is a four year university or a specialty technical school. It’s your life and your dream and your legacy. Don’t allow fear to stop you. You have great potential within you. Don’t let anything stop you from reaching that potential.

Thank you