

Brandon's Eagle Speech

Welcome everyone, I understand that when they were looking for a speaker for today, they asked a great orator, someone was well liked by all, who is handsome, and amazing but unfortunately, they were unavailable... so instead they asked me. [Pause and smile] In all seriousness, I am greatly honored to be here today to celebrate with you all Brandon's accomplishment as well as to say a little bit about the eagle scout award.

As the NESA eagle roll says:

"The Eagle Scout Award. It's Scouting's highest rank and among its most familiar icons. [Those] who have earned it count it among their most treasured possessions. Those who missed it by a whisker remember exactly which requirement they didn't complete. Americans from all walks of life know that being an Eagle Scout is a great honor, even if they don't know just what the badge means.

The award is more than a badge. It's a state of being. You are an Eagle Scout—never were. [Slow down] [Look around the room] You may have received the badge as a [youth], but you earn it every day as a[n adult]. In the words of the Eagle Scout Promise, you do your best each day to make your training and example, your rank and your influence count strongly for better Scouting and for better citizenship in your troop, in your community, and in your contacts with other people. And to this you pledge your sacred honor."

From the first eagle scout, Arthur Rose Eldred in 1910 there have been over 2.75 million men and women who have earned the award, to put it in perspective this is a little bigger than Chicago. This last eagle class, which you are a part of, was comprised of 29 thousand people (a little bigger than Marshalltown). When you compare this to the over one million youth who participated in scouting (or half the size of the Kansas City metro area), this means a little less than 3% of scouts earned their eagle scout award. While doing this they completed roughly 2.8 million hours of service projects, if you split that up it equates to 97 hours per eagle. This service project helps not only the eagle, but their fellow scouts step outside their bubble, identify a problem, make a plan, and follow through on it. It helps you to think about things bigger than just your immediate self and also is a taste of leading and marshaling others, some who are far older and more experienced than you are. Brandon, in your case, your bird houses helped to make the world just a bit better.

So who are your fellow eagle scouts? They include Astronauts, politicians, businessmen, teachers, like first man on the moon Neil Armstrong, or Jim Lovel of the Apollo 13 mission. Bill Amend [uh-MEND] artist of the Foxtrot Cartoons, Inventor of the first electronic television Philo Farnsworth, or Kevin Kwan Loucks [Loaks] concert pianist. It also

includes less famous people like Jamie Bryant, who later became an auto mechanic, ran several Goodyear auto service centers, and gave back serving as an Automotive maintenance Merit badge Counselor. Or, Don Garlits [GAR-litz], pioneer in the sport of drag racing.

You don't have to stop at famous people though. It has been my experience that you always know who the eagle scouts are when you meet them. They are always willing and able to help either at work, out in their community, or at Church. They are the ones quick to tie the right knot, able to lead by example, have first aid skills, and able to start a good campfire. There is always something about your fellow eagle scouts that just makes them stand out a little bit. As TV host Mike Rowe once said "I learned to lead as a Boy Scout, and I'd like to think I still do today." These skills are recognized by those around you as well. They were the inspiration for Chris Evans when he starred as Captain America. "There's a kid that I grew up with named Charlie Morris. He's the best kid I know. He was an Eagle Scout. And being an Eagle Scout is not easy — you've got to really do it for a long time. But he's just such a good man, and he genuinely, genuinely puts himself last. He lives by a code. And so, when I took the role, I told Charlie, 'Listen. I'm modeling this after you.'" [Pause] [Look at audience]

As Dr Randy Pausch [Pow-sh] (another eagle scout who was a Professor of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University) once said "Becoming an eagle scout is just about the only thing you can put on your resume at age 50 that you did at age 14 and it still impresses". I know personally, it is still a major highlight of my resume.

Mike Rowe sends to eagle scouts. "Don't wait for the fold to acknowledge your accomplishments. By all means take pride in what you've done, but don't let it go to your head... Fold up your sash and stow it away somewhere private with the other tokens of what you've done so far. then roll up your sleeves, get out into the world and put what you've learned to use.

For me, the skills that I learned in scouting have helped me so many times, whether it be the love of camping and the outdoors that it has instilled in me, the first aid skills that I have had to practice on myself and others (what can I say, I'm a clutz) [Smile] [Shrug], or the taste of hobbies and life skills that I picked up in all the different merit badges, like personal finance. It has also proved incalculably helpful in the organization and leadership skills, it has helped me learn, whether that be at work, serving in my church or community organizations like the State of Iowa Science and Technology Fair Board. Brandon, I know that scouting has provided the same for you and I challenge you to go out now into life and put your skills to use. Be that light in the world that shows others by example. [Look directly at Brandon]

I will leave you with a Poem by Richelle E Goodrich, Today you Soar:

“Like the grand eagle, you spread your wings

And put forth the effort to do great things...

So now you’ve reached where few even try

As the eagle high in a glorious sky.

Not superior, but grand.

Not proud, but sure.

Not a cub, wolf, or bear but an eagle pure.

[Slow down] Today [Brandon] you soar.”