Mr. David T. Horn
Retirement Celebration
The Union League, Philadelphia
October 29, 2014
Remarks of Tom Foley
President, Mount Aloysius College

I have three assignments here tonight—a word about the artist, a word about the honoree and finally a word about why we chose a painting.

First, about our artist, Mr. Charles McLaughlin. Chuck McLaughlin is an emerging realist artist who lives and works in Glenside and is a fellow graduate of Bishop McDevitt High School.

After receiving his BFA in 2008, his portfolio has grown to include oil, acrylic, charcoal and graphite paintings. He says that he has been inspired by his experiences as a trail-runner, Appalachian Trail-hiker, sky-gazer and I am certain from his experience as a student of Mr. Horn.

As proof of that last inspiration, his bio says that Chuck “uses light” to find perspective on his subjects, to isolate mood in his portraits and to convey beauty—that sounds an awful lot like a term we learned in humanities back in 1971—Chiaroscuro. Thank you, Chuck and thank you, Mr. Horn for that long ago lesson on the use of light in painting and in literature.

Second, a few words about our honoree. Not much that I can add at this point in the evening. The portrait of Mr. Horn, as suggested here tonight by the sentiments of my colleagues, is a painting of many hues suffused with multiple layers of meaning—exactly like the diverse schools of art and architecture with which he insisted we should each be familiar way back when.

We all profited from your instruction in the classroom—whether it was History, English or Humanities. A teacher should touch the future, and you certainly did, Mr. Horn.

My senior “Humanities” class was as good as any course I ever took or taught anywhere—high school, college or law school. Mr. Horn was about 85% of the reason for that. The other 15% was my classmates like Dan Ryan and Dave Schaefer, Maria Wynitsky, Bob Seigel, Joe Braun, Tony Serianni and so many others.
Mr. Horn also used to teach History to C-6. In our day, that was Rick Kelly, Whale Byrne and a bunch of characters you just couldn’t make up. I got to know those guys while lining up next to Whale and trying to protect Kelly from defensive lineman 80 pounds bigger than me at places like Judge and Dougherty.

Whale surprised me once by telling me what a great teacher you were, Mr. Horn. I wasn’t surprised that someone thought you were a great teacher. I just didn’t know how Whale knew. He is without a doubt one of the smartest people in my graduation class (though not exactly devoted to book studies) but I had no idea you taught history to C-6 until he told me.

I told Whale that that must have been a tough assignment, figuring these guys—in whose hijinks I had occasionally participated—would have just ‘moidered’ our Mr. Horn. Whale assured me that that wasn’t the case at all. He explained that Mr. Horn had high expectations for them, and they responded to that.

He expected them to listen and to learn, he expected no less from them than what he got from those of us lucky enough to be in C-1. They weren’t used to that kind of treatment, and they absolutely responded to it. So your influence inside the classroom wasn’t restricted to the high IQs floating around this room tonight, and I thought it was worth pointing that out.

We also profited from Mr. Horn’s instruction outside the classroom—from the often pedantic (we were so often full of ourselves), occasionally childish (we were teenagers), and (once in a while) brilliant banter and revealing repartee that you tolerated as we stretched—intellectually and socially, vocally and verbally—in your company. It was banter that we engaged in

- on long drives to far away destinations for debate and speech tournaments
- on short walks as we prepared to enter the arena of competition (during which he always reminded us to “be persuasive”) and
- during occasional one-on-one talks where Mr. Horn let us know his expectations for each of us (and more importantly let us know that he absolutely believed we’d have no problem reaching those lofty expectations and goals).

So thank you for all the instruction in debate and in life outside the classroom.

Finally, a word about why we chose a painting. Mr. Horn, one of your favorite writers that you required us to read all those years ago was Henry Brooks Adams, and at one point in his seminal book “The Education of Henry Adams,” he describes a teacher as a person who “affects eternity, he can never tell where his influence stops.”
That pretty much says it all about you Mr. Horn. And your influence—which to judge by this room, has yet to “stop”—is the reason for Herman’s bright idea to choose a portrait as gift—so that generations of students will be reminded of the impact of our own Mr. David T. Horn.

You affect eternity, and as tonight is testimony, you can never tell “where your influence stops.”

So thank you Mr. Horn for the instruction inside and outside the classroom.

Thank you for permission to banter with you.

Thank you for looking after so many other people’s children.

And frankly, Mr. Horn, thank you for the love. We love you too.