

2007 TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY SPEECH – BRIAN STUHLMAN

Good evening to you, ladies and gentlemen, scholars, parents, faculty, staff, teachers, instructors, professors, tutors, mentors, babysitters, counselors, Missourians, out-of-state-ans, and Dave Welch. It is my humble honor and distinct privilege to herald your attendance here tonight at this Missouri Scholars Academy Teacher Appreciation thing, and extend a welcome on behalf of the scholars...

Welcome to Nerd Camp! We associates with MSA have been calling MSA Nerd Camp for a long time. It may seem a rather harsh title considering the outstanding clientele we have here, but believe me, ladies and gentlemen, no better name exists to describe the goings-on of this place. For those not familiar with MSA, these 320 students this year are, indeed, representatives of the best young minds of the state...but they are also some of the classiest nerds you will ever meet...and that's a good thing...and I feel I can say this without offense, because I myself was a 1993 Nerd...er, Scholar.

It was 14 years ago this week that I decided, it was in my MSA major class, that I was inspired to become a teacher...inspired by a teacher just like you. I am teaching at the academy now, and can still see aspects of myself in some of these folks. These folks who, for example, balked the first time they were told they were in Nerd Camp...and then wrote down the joke in their pocket notebooks so they could use it later. But these students are class act human beings, and I know that your presence here means so much to them. It can sometimes feel like a big risk to acknowledge one's heroes, and I am very glad that you were able be here tonight to be acknowledged. Your presence speaks volumes of your commitment to teaching and the ultimate effect you may have had on at least one rising young mind.

I would like to be selfish for just a second and pay special attention to two people here...first, my own nominee for tonight...my mother Ellen. My mom went back to school after we four children were in school, and graduated from college a year before I did, with a slightly higher GPA, and now teaches middle school English in Palmyra. It's been said that, "Teachers teach more by what they are than by what they say," and my mother is a beautiful teacher of brilliance and light. With her tonight is the other woman who's taken it upon herself to help mold my mind, my wife Maryna, with whom I am celebrating two years of wedded bliss tonight.