

# Laney Graduation Speech 2009

By: Ray Henderson III

“The World is Ours”

Good afternoon, First I would like to give an Honor to God and to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I also want to thank our esteemed members of the Peralta Community College District, Chancellor Elihu Harris, Trustees President Frank Chong, the Administrators, Faculty and staff, and the Graduation Committee, chaired by Dr. Tina Vasconsellos for all the hard work and effort put into making this such great event.

But most importantly of all I want to say

congratulations to the Honorees (The class 2009) Can we please give them a Grand round of applause!!!.....

When I was first informed that I would be giving a speech for graduation as The President of The Associated Students of Laney College, I was flattered because this is a great honor, so in no way did I take it lightly...

A great man once asked a question “**What happens when a Dream is deferred**”?

*Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?*

Or Fester like a sore-And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat? **Or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load-Or does it explode?**

The man that asked those questions is the great American Poet, Play Write, Novelist and fighter for Civil Rights Langston Hughes.. So many times people have had dreams and let them slip through their fingertips. But I am proud to say today that you all held on to your dreams and would not let go. You held on to those ***dreams*** with such **tenacity**, as if holding on for **DEAR LIFE**. Not letting those **DREAMS** fall to the wayside. Not letting that **dream**, be – deferred. Many of you stayed up numerous late nights, studying preparing for tests and final exams, then getting right back up after a short break to take your kids to school or the babysitters.

Others of you went to study groups after football, baseball, or track practice and your bodies were aching, but you pressed on. Some of you worked

5,6,7,8, and even 9 hour shifts at your jobs to the wee hours of the morning, afternoon, and night, and the thought probably crossed your mind how good that bed would feel.

Some of you even heard that very bed calling your name, but yet and still **YOU PRESSED ON**. Some of you had no money in your pockets, with no idea when the financial aid checks were coming, and your credit cards maxed out, and you needed to buy a book or two from the book store for the price it seemed that of a small car, **but thank God**, he made a way out of no way, and sent you to the E.O.P.S office, or the Care Program, where you received the additional help you needed to get you through those financial storms.

And also to our International students who

traveled many miles to come to America and receive their education and fought through various adversities to get here for this very moment today, leaving behind their families and their homes. The fact that you are here today, my highest regards goes out to you.

Here at Laney College Our mascot is the **eagle**. The **eagle** is a powerful symbol. The **eagle** is a bird of prey, the highest in the food chain. The **eagle** has extremely keen eye sight enabling them to see their prey from afar and a storm while still in the distance. The eagle is a symbol of grace and power.

You the class of 2009 are **Eagles**, and with your powerful wings and keen eyesight, you not only weathered the storm, you flew over the storm with grace and honor. I remember some time last year my brother sent me an email about an Eagle who was flying high in

the sky, looking for its prey, and with its keen eyesight, it saw a fish in the water and swooped down with such sheer velocity, the fish had no idea what hit it, but as the eagle flew back into the sky above, it realized that it did not have its prey, because it had no talons or claws.

The reason I am giving you this as an analogy is because by you completing your courses and finishing many prerequisites, and by receiving your A.A. and other certificates, you now have the talons or claws to grasp your prey. That **prey** being that job you are aspiring to get. That **prey** being transferring on to the next level of education, going to a four year learning institution and attaining more goals. My fellow associates as your goals grow let your talons grow, and stay sharp, and stay ready, for there is no need to get ready-if you stay ready.

So in closing, my friends I just want to say “

**Don't use what you learn today tomorrow, use what you learn today-today**, and set a standard for the next up and coming generations to aim for, challenge the system and stand up for what's right, being leaders not followers, because for the graduating class of 2009 Laney eagles... **THE WORLD IS YOURS!!!!**

**THANKYOU**