

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

SBA alumni Jim Norrod speaks at spring commencement

Oakland University's May commencement ceremony featured **Jim Norrod**, SBA '70, former CEO, Segway, a leader in the small electric vehicle category, marketing a full line of Segway Personal Transporters that are sold through a network of dealers, distributors and retail partners in more than 75 countries worldwide. Norrod, who has **visited OU's campus frequently**, meeting with SBA students and inspiring them with his message of innovation, teamwork and entrepreneurial spirit.

His remarks focused on the promising future for OU graduates by saying "Tough time to start a career? Instead, I would argue it's the best time."

He continued by saying, "Whether you want to be a champion in sports, engineering, health care, academics or business, there are a few basic rules that I have learned."

He shared those rules with the audience:

- Great preparation of the basics. "That's why you spent the last several years here at OU," Norrod said.
- Surround yourself with great people and even great mentors. "My mentor in IBM was a guy by the name of Joe Zemke (actually a Hamtramck native). I attached myself to his sleeve. When I asked him what was the one thing to which he attributed his success...his answer was, 'Surround yourself with great people and in fact hire people smarter and better than you.' Many people do just the opposite," Norrod noted.
- Do the right thing. "So, how do you know what the right thing is? I bet you already know. Something your parents have been teaching you since you were a young child," he said.
- Do what you fear the most.
- Listen, not just hear. "The only sign on my desk, facing me not the person across from me said 'Shut up.'"
- Remember the champion motto: It is not the number of times you fail that counts, but the number of times you succeed. Don't fear failure. Use it as a step to success. Same thing with your career -- especially in these trying times and markets. "I always told my sales people, I will only get on you for not trying. Losses, or failures are only steps to success. You are trying to get to the success," Norrod said.
- Lastly, remember passion and fun. "Spend one-third of your time with your job, one-third with your family and one-third sleeping. Do what you enjoy and have fun."

He concluded with one last piece of advice: "With your careers, always think forward. And I guarantee that you will move forward and have a great success."

SUMMARY

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Created by Claudette Zolkowski-Brown (zolkowsk@oakland.edu) on Wednesday, May 12, 2010
Modified by Claudette Zolkowski-Brown (zolkowsk@oakland.edu) on Wednesday, May 12, 2010
Article Start Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2010