Remarks by Edward R. Morrison  
Recipient of the Par Excellence Award  
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Every graduate of the U leaves this institution with a sense of urgency, plunging headlong into a new and exciting future, full of career and personal challenges. For 15 years now, I have been making that headlong plunge. I have been focused on the future, rarely looking back, except occasionally to drive my kids around my old neighborhoods when I return to Salt Lake City.

Maybe this is common among people my age. I have taken my roots for granted. I thought my roots could be found in the house where I celebrated Christmas, the blocks where I walked my dog, the mountains where I learned to ski.

But this award made me realize that my roots reach much wider. My sense of myself is indeed rooted in my childhood and high school experiences. But my skills, my ambitions, and my sense of what works and what is nonsense—all of these things are rooted in hundreds of small, vivid experiences with my teachers at the U.

I can identify particular, concrete events at the U that made me who I am. The memories are vivid in my mind.

1. At the Bureau of Economic and Business Research, located in the U’s Business School, I was shown my career: law and economics. My boss, Boyd Fjeldsted, handed me a copy of the *Journal of Law & Economics*, telling me that my interests in law and in economics weren’t mutually exclusive.

2. At the Business School, I was shown what it means to write an academic article, which is now the bread and butter of my daily life. Though he had never seen me in a classroom, Bob Allen spent weeks coaching me through around 15 entirely new drafts of a paper that, ultimately, won a national writing competition.

3. At the U, and at a summer in Greece sponsored by the U, I was shown what it means to be a scholar by Jim Svendsen. He showed me what it means to be empirical. It means harnessing arguments and theories to facts, which have been unearthed through a painstaking, focused effort. Jim is a classics scholar and theater dramaturg; I am an economist and statistician. Yet my sense of what is good scholarship is a gift from Jim.

4. And Ann Engar, together with the dear, departed Barbara Lindsay and Bill Hanly, showed me what it means to be an ethical human being. They cared for me, drove me home from school, after I underwent an operations. They worried about me, and in the end helped me become a better person.

All of these people were selfless. They gave more than they were asked to give. They gave themselves. And to think I often take all this for granted. I try—perhaps in vain—to model my behavior on theirs. I hope to inspire students as they inspired and guided me. This award, from the U, makes clearer to me the kind of person I am and hope to become. For that I am grateful.

This award is also a reminder that, as we plunge headlong into the future, it’s good to keep track of our past. Our roots remind us of who we are; they keep us on track. And they remind us to be humble. It’s easy to think, in this headlong plunge, that we are responsible for our futures. But we only share responsibility. We owe debts of gratitude to teachers like the ones I had the honor to meet at the U.