

President Farmer: Thankful for the American Dream

[Photo: Dr. Farmer.jpg] 11/16/18 — *A monthly column written by Dr. Tod Allen Farmer, WC president, for the Weatherford Democrat newspaper.*

Sophocles famously stated, “There is no success without hardship.” The Pilgrims who first settled what would become America endured great hardships. In both their 66-day journey across the Atlantic, and through their first ferocious winter in the New World, hardship was their constant companion. Within a year of their departure from England, disease and exposure had claimed the lives of approximately half of the original Mayflower passengers. Continually plagued by disease and famine, the surviving Pilgrims were aided by Native Americans who helped them learn to cultivate corn and procure other food sources. Following the first successful corn harvest, a three-day feast was celebrated in November of 1621. Historians generally consider this feast as the origin of our American Thanksgiving holiday.

As we approach this Thanksgiving season, I find myself pondering the things for which I am most thankful. I am thankful to have been born with a sound mind and a healthy body, in the greatest nation the world has ever known. Furthermore, to be born a Texan, and to have the privilege to live and raise my family in Parker County is immeasurable. What a privilege to live in a community that promotes family values and provides quality educational opportunities. Countless veterans made the ultimate sacrifice so that we can worship as we see fit, raise our families in peace and prosperity, and savor the fruits of freedom. For these things I am thankful.

Beyond God and Country, I am incredibly thankful for my family. When I ponder how such an imperfect and unworthy human like me could end up with such a wonderful family, I am befuddled and perplexed. Perhaps Sophocles would point to the role that hardship played in my human development. Perhaps God blessed me with the hardships in my childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood so that I would build the character and work ethic necessary to reinvent and refine myself as a human being time and time again. Without the pain and sorrow of hardship, would I truly be able to savor the full richness of thankfulness?

This Thanksgiving season, I also find myself incredibly thankful for my experiences at Weatherford College, both past and present. In June of 1985, a dirt poor Weatherford boy came to Weatherford College for the first time. He was welcomed by warm, caring educators who were committed to improving the human condition. Furthermore, his mind was challenged and stretched by new ways of thinking, and an insatiable appetite for learning was cultivated. This led to a passion for life-long learning, the procurement of advanced degrees, and the career choice of education as a service to humanity. Decades later, as president of Weatherford College, this boy become man has the distinct privilege to collaboratively expand the educational opportunities of current students, and to help them overcome their personal hardships and realize the American Dream.

The first of my many personal transformations occurred at the intersection of hardship and opportunity. Like the Pilgrims, the great personal hardships I endured ultimately claimed the lives of some of my family members and friends. These great hardships served as a burning fire that would either consume or purify. And just as the Native Americans gave the Pilgrims hope and opportunity, Weatherford College forever changed my life for the better by providing quality educational opportunity. My Weatherford College education helped me realize the American Dream, and vastly expanded the opportunities in life that my descendants would enjoy.

This Thanksgiving, I find myself incredibly thankful for the American Dream. When I think of the opportunities that Weatherford College has provided to countless numbers of our community's sons and daughters, I am filled with deep gratitude. Our forefathers toiled, and our veterans protected, so that our great nation and our dynamic community could provide societal opportunities for its citizens to overcome personal hardships. For 150 years, Weatherford College has changed lives and helped innumerable citizens overcome personal hardships and realize the American Dream. The American Dream is alive and well at Weatherford College, and for that ladies and gentlemen... I am exceedingly thankful!

Tod Allen Farmer

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