

Top-notch criminal defense attorney, '71 alumnus Schneider urges members of Class of 2015 graduates to love their work

5/16/15



Stanley G. Schneider, one of the nation's top-rated criminal defense attorneys offered Alfred University's (AU) Class of 2015 some well-deliberated advice "love your work and your relationships; don't settle for less."

Schneider, a 1971 AU alumnus, spoke Saturday morning (May 16) before a capacity crowd in the Galanis Family Arena at the McLane Center on campus.

His message was taken from his own life experiences, he explained, noting "Success is defined in many different ways Judge yourself (don't let others do it for you). Success comes from your own sense of decency and accomplishment. Find your passion in life. Create your own style, follow your heart and your intuition. I followed my heart to a rewarding career."

Schneider urged the graduates to "feel a tremendous responsibility to look at today as a true commencement, a beginning of the next chapter of the as yet unwritten" story of your life.

"Life is something you experience. There is no core curriculum, it's all electives and the results are uncertain."

When he left Alfred, Schneider said he was uncertain how his life story would play out. Following law school his first job was in a prison where he was assigned to the death row inmates - "It changed my life forever."

At his first meeting with a death row inmate, he shook hands with the inmate when he arrived and left. Upon leaving the cell a guard took him aside and said if he ever touched a death row inmate again he would be fired.

"They are to have no human contact. It (that admonishment) gave me a sense of inhumanity and shame that was overwhelming." From thereon in he knew his role was to have a "quest for justice and fairness," even with those who had been charged with unimaginable crimes.

Over a 40-year career Schneider has been "driven by the desire to help and protect people. I enjoy getting up each morning I love what I do," he said urging "find your love in work and in relationships."

A partner in the Houston-based law firm Schneider and McKinney, Schneider, a history major at AU, has represented numerous death-row inmates, and has been successful in getting convictions overturned in several landmark cases.

He gained national attention when he won a new trial for Wanda Holloway, known in the media as the "Cheerleader Mom," for hiring someone to kill the mother of one her daughter's rivals. Holloway had been convicted on her first

trial and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Schneider successfully argued one of the jurors for her first trial was ineligible. Rather than face a second trial, Holloway pleaded nolo contendere (no contest) to the charges before her second trial and served six months of a 10-year sentence.

Presiding over the day&s program was Dr. Charles M. Edmondson, AU president, with Provost W. Richard Stephens Jr., provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, serving as master of ceremonies where more than 500 (note: numbers include those who completed studies in August and December 2014) degrees - six doctoral, 87 master&s, 414 bachelor&s, and 30 advanced studies certificates (credentials allowing practice professionally as a counselor) were awarded.

Prior to giving the keynote address, Schneider was presented by Dr. Gary Ostrower, professor of history at AU and Class of 1961, for the award of an honorary doctor of laws degree-honoris causa in recognition of Schneider&s life&s work in the criminal justice system. Gregory Connors &92 and Frederick A. George &75, both members of the AU Board of Trustees, performed the hooding ceremony for Schneider.

Dr. Nancy Evangelista, associate provost and dean of the School of Professional Studies, assisted with the awarding of doctoral and master&s degrees.

Just before the undergraduate portion of the ceremony, Brennan O. Ferguson and Daniel G. Totten, the 2015 Marlin Miller Outstanding Seniors who were members of the stage party, addressed their classmates. They were introduced by Kathy Woughter &93, vice president for Student Affairs.

Ferguson, a chemistry and environmental science double-major with a minor in mathematics from Destrehan, LA, and Daniel Totten, an art and design major with a concentration in sculpture from Red Hook, NY, were chosen as the young woman and young man in the AU senior class who have “contributed most to the life of the University overall” and who have “built uncompromised reputations” for this highest all-around recognition of accomplishment the University bestows upon a student.

Also, four graduating seniors were recognized during the exercises for achieving top honors in their respective areas of study. They were part of the official stage party and seated on the Commencement platform throughout the ceremonies.

Tops in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is Ferguson, who earned a bachelor of arts degree with an overall 3.97 GPA (grade point average) out of a possible 4.0. She is a daughter of Sam Ferguson and Barbara Owens and a graduate of Ursuline Academy.

Nicole R. Anderson, an art and design major from Hubbardsville, NY is the top students in the School of Art and Design earning a bachelor of fine arts degree with a 3.97 GPA. She is a daughter of Christine Rossi and Theodore Anderson and a graduate of Hamilton Central School.

A glass and engineering science major from Webster, Elizabeth Ann Clark, is the outstanding academic senior in the Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering. She earned a bachelor of science degree with a 3.86 GPA. Clark is a daughter of Richard and Suzanne Clark and a graduate of Bishop Kearney High School.

An accounting major who earned a bachelor of science degree, Kelly Jo Marjorie Stein from Scottsville tallied a 3.94 GPA. She is a daughter of David and Kathleen Stein and a graduate of Caledonia-Mumford Central High School.

Baccalaureate degrees were conferred, in order, by Dr. Louis Lichtman, dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Dr. Gerar Edizel, interim dean, School of Art and Design; Dr. Doreen Edwards, dean, Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering; and Evangelista.

Leading the Commencement procession for the culmination of the 179th year was Grand Marshal Dr. Wilfred Huang, professor of management information systems. Faculty marshals included Dr. Wesley Bentz, professor emeritus of chemistry; Dr. Frederick Beaudry, assistant professor of environmental science; Dr. William Carty, professor of

materials science and engineering; Dr. Hope Childers, assistant professor of art history; Dr. Kate Dimitrova, assistant professor of art history; Dr. Elizabeth Ann Dobie, professor of art theory; Dr. Juliana Gray, associate professor of English; Dr. Theresa Gunn, assistant professor of accountancy; Mark Lewis, visiting clinical instructor of business; Dr. David W. Lipke, assistant professor of materials science and engineering; Susan P. Morehouse, professor of English; Dr. Steven M. Pilgrim, professor of materials science and engineering; Angus M. Powers, associate professor of glass; Dr. Joseph W. Rosiczkowski, professor of mechanical engineering; Dr. Jeffrey Sluyeter-Beltrao, associate professor of political science; Dr. G. David Toot, professor of physics; Kelly Williams, clinical instructor of education; and Christopher Yartym, clinical instructor of athletic training.

Accompanied by the AU Symphonic Band, under the direction of Dr. Christopher Foster, seniors

Aubrey Fry, Katherine Turnquist, Vanessa Romance, Ben Proctor and Liam Maillero led the crowd in singing the “National Anthem” prior to the ceremonies. The Symphonic Band also provided pre-ceremony music and processional and recessional selections.

The invocation and benediction for the ceremony were provided by The Rev. Laurie J. DeMott, interfaith adviser and minister of the Union University Church, Alfred.

Schneider was named the outstanding Criminal Defense Lawyer by the State Bar of Texas, Criminal Justice Section, 1997. He has been listed in “Best Lawyers in America” in Criminal Defense and White Collar Defense from 2004-12. “Texas Lawyer” has listed him as a “Super Lawyer” from 2004-14. “Texas Lawyer&s 2007 Go-To Guide” named him one of four “Top Notch Criminal Defense Lawyers in Texas.”

In 2012, he was named the “[Go-To Criminal Defense Lawyer in Texas](#)” in “Texas Lawyer” newspaper&s 2012 Go-To Guide. In 2011, “Texas Lawyer Magazine” named Schneider one of the “[Twenty Five Greatest Texas Lawyers of the Past Quarter-Century](#).” “Super Lawyers” named Schneider to the “[Top 100 Houston Texas Super Lawyers 2011 List](#).” And in 2007, he and a fellow Houston attorney received the “Order of Merit” from The Republic of Argentina for their work on a death penalty case involving an Argentine national on Texas& death row.

Schneider is board certified in criminal law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. He is licensed to practice in the U.S. District Courts for the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Districts of Texas, and in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee. He is also licensed to practice in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth, Tenth, and Eleventh Circuits and the Supreme Court of the United States.

He appeared in a segment of the March 11, 2006, edition of CBS&s “48 Hours Mystery” entitled “Texas Confidential” as a specialist in state and federal criminal trials and appeals. Schneider was also one of four attorneys asked to contribute to the Houston Chronicle&s Legal Commentary blog during the course of the 2006 Enron trial.

Schneider&s professional affiliations include membership with the following: the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, for which he has served as treasurer, vice president, and president; the Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association, for which he served as president; the State Bar of Texas, where he served on the 4E Grievance Committee; the American Academy of Forensic Science; the Texas Board of Legal Specialization; the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers; and the American Bar Association.