

National College of Natural Medicine Commencement

**William "Bill" J. Keppler, PhD
President Emeritus
Monday, 28 June 2009**

First and foremost I am humbled by this highest honor NCNM can give to any individual, an honorary degree. By doing so this allows me membership in the Class of 2009 and for that I am most grateful to the faculty who nominated me, to Dr. Heather Zwickey's Honorary Degree Committee, and to Provost Andrea Smith and President David Schleich for supporting my nomination for this honor. However, let me say clearly, that by honoring me, you honor our NCNM faculty forever who made NCNM the institution it is today. I respectfully wish to share this honor with them.

Also, I am grateful and wish everyone to know that my wife, Ann and her sister, Susy, from Omaha, Nebraska, my son, Dan and his wife, Meagan, and granddaughters, Emma and Claire, gave me strong support for the five and a half years I had the high privilege of serving as President of NCNM.

Those were challenging and demanding years when the College was 30 days from closure in July 2003, a debt of two million dollars, and still unaccredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the recognized link to the U.S. Department of Education. In one year, we were completely out of debt and two years later, on 16 June 2005 NCNM received "full institutional accreditation" by the U.S. Department of Education with no strings attached! So thank you, again, board members, thank you, administrators, thank you, Presidential Ambassador Leadership Students, PALS, and your annual Legacy Projects, and thank you, faculty, staff, and students for your enthusiasm and support. I also respectfully wish to acknowledge the financial contributions of Mr. and Mrs. Scott South and Mr. Don Helfgott, CEO of Inspiration Software, when 72 hours from institutional closure by the U.S. Department of Education, gave me the financial resources to finally balance our NCNM budget.

Further, some comments to the Class of 2009 whom I join today on this joyous and memorable Commencement. First, this is your day, you have earned it, and you deserve it! However, a commencement is the beginning of your journey, not the end. I respectfully request you now use your time, talents, and treasures in natural medicine to heal our citizens and educate them about disease prevention and good health practices.

You can make a difference! If I could sit beside each of you and tell you what I have learned in 70 years of living, it would be to make a difference in someone's else's life. Everyone of you can do that or else you would not have gotten this far in your education. If you do that, you will make a profound difference in your own

