

**Excerpts from Texas First Lady Anita Perry's Commencement Address
to Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical
Sciences- DVM Ceremony
May 10, 2007**

“Several of you graduating today may join existing practices or go into areas of established research. It will be intimidating at times, educational at others and probably uncomfortable more than once, but during those times be confident in your knowledge and instincts. That said, let me also add that there is a line between confidence and arrogance. The confident veterinarian may earn respect, but those who approach a situation with a greater mix of arrogance do not.

“I have a favorite saying: ‘You don’t drown by falling in the water. You drown by staying there.’ Occasionally human failures come out of nowhere and it’s part of life even for those veterinarians who are so bright. Failure is OK. Perfection is not a realistic goal, but persistence certainly is. If you learn to master that, life’s little hiccups will become a lot less tragic and a lot more educational.”

“Learn to accept help, even if it might make you feel foolish at the time. There may be some people who don’t have your best interest at heart, but there are many more that will.”

“Learn to be gracious and say thank you even if you might not feel like it at the time. This is especially applicable to parents and older relatives. I’ve learned as my own parent’s age, that their wisdom is indispensable and irreplaceable. Treasure those moments, even if they don’t make sense at the time. Their insight may just sneak up on you when you least expect it.”

“Keep several people around who are always happy to see you. People often joke that a dog is always happy and wagging its tail when it sees its owner; no matter what, your dog loves you unconditionally. I don’t think that’s such a bad criticism, and we’d be a lot happier if we took a few clues from our furry euphoric pals.”

“The ability to make someone’s eyes light up when you walk in the room is a supreme achievement in our lives. Whether it’s a spouse or a child, a family member, friend or colleague, make it your goal each day to make someone smile for a moment, and soon you’ll realize you don’t have to try anymore, it just happens with your presence. Their lives will be richer for it and your heart certainly will be.”

“Take some of these tips with you on your journey to be a good doctor, Aggie, Texan and most importantly a kind and wise human being.”