

A PARABLE OF TALENTS

A tribute to our Founders

In all creativity
 There is nothing more beautiful to me
 Than when the heavens declare the
 Glory of God!
 Great stars blazing down
 Or just a single star
 Shining radiantly
 As if to say, "Follow me."

Over a century ago, an Iowa school teacher was saying to her students, "Hitch your wagon to a star --- never mind if you never attain your star --- your effort will be self development". Virginia Alice Coffin was the school teacher, and it was because of her philosophy centering around the star that she suggested that the emblem of P.E.O. should be a star, thereby laying a cornerstone of our organization.

What about the other founders --- Mary Allen, Ella Stewart, Alice Bird, Hattie Briggs, Franc Roads and Suela Pearson? Each of them shared her own talent in building the foundation of P.E.O., and we still feel their talents today.

Paul had a few words to say about talents, or gifts, in I Corinthians: "Everyone has his own particular gift from God, some one thing, some another." That's it, a Parable of Talents --- a P.E.O. Parable of Talents! Our heritage begins to seem very clear.

Suddenly,
 I sense the wonder of God's hand
 That brings to each of us
 A single talent or
 Many talents
 To use in any way we wish,
 Or to misuse,
 Or never to use at all.

What if those seven college girls over a century ago had chosen not to use their talents in this way? What if they had used their talents for their own benefit? Or if they had simply not used them at all? Chances are we wouldn't be here today.

Don't think of the P.E.O. Parable of Talents as being limited to our founders, however, because it is still being written today. Look around you --- can't you just see a 1980 Mary Allen Stafford or Alice Coffin? One sister's writing ability may bring to mind the talent that inspired Alice Babb to write the constitution and oath. Another sister's

musical artistry is reminiscent of Suela Pearson. Hattie Briggs' sunny disposition and warm smile are here under another name, along with Ella Stewart's enthusiasm and the charming wit belonging to Franc Roads is sprinkled generously throughout the room.

At a P.E.O. convention several years ago, Franc Roads challenged PEOs to accept the torch being handed to them, by using their own talents.

She said, "Do not try to preserve precedents because of sentiment, for new times demand new needs. Evolution and growth mean life to organizations as well as individuals. Please remember that true loyalty to those gone before you in P.E.O., to the founders if you will, lies in improving the unfinished structure they bequeathed to you, for P.E.O. is only in its beginning." Franc Roads could say this same thing today.

Wouldn't it be a fitting tribute in 1980 if each P.E.O. would accept this challenge to seek growth today and tomorrow --- to use our talents to promote P.E.O. in any way we can?

With this thought in mind, will you please read with me "A Tribute to our Founders", which you will find at your place at the table.

A Tribute To Our Founders

*Joyfully...I shall share any talent
With which I have been blest
Knowing that I need not concern
Myself over talents
Which are not mine to give,
For they will be supplied by
My sisters.*

*It fills me with a sense of wonder
Knowing that somehow the
Gentle hand of God
Will graciously accept our talents...
My sisters' and mine...*

*And turn them into
A myriad of miracles!*

Jean Lamb, AN
1980 Tribute