

A Reflection on Convocation 2011

By Gina Riley

Looking back, I realized that this was my 6th Convocation attended. I started attending Convo and presenting sessions as an undergraduate student at The University of Wisconsin–Platteville with fellow students and professors Dr. Rea Kirk and Dr. John Nkemnji.

Now as a 10-year educator, I continue to come to Convo for camaraderie, networking, and gaining knowledge and insight into the complex world of education. I also greatly enjoy sharing ideas that have worked for me as a teacher. Convocation motivates me and reminds me why we love our jobs so much. I am so thankful that my Iota Rho chapter invites me to join them at Convocation. Keeping the connection with the professors and current students is so important. Additionally, as an advisor for *New Teacher Advocate*, I have learned a great deal about editing and professional writing for educators.

This past year has been a rough year to be an educator in the state of Wisconsin. Educators have not been respected as professionals and valued for what we do for children and the future. As with many states around the country, severe budget cuts impacted our school and personal pocketbooks. My building is working hard to make positive changes, but the staff in my school is stressed and hurting from the damage that has been done to our school families. For my fellow staff members and me, professional development, supplies, and program offerings have been negatively affected. We are living in tough economic times, and it is difficult some days to stay positive and hopeful for the future of our country and education system.

Thank you to KDP and my fellow Kadelpians for motivating me at Convocation to keep the spirit. Each member I talked to in Indianapolis was supportive and put what I am experiencing as an educator in perspective. Even though it is a tough time in education, I still make a positive difference in the lives of children and should be proud of who I am and what I do for my students. In the words of our speakers; I AM A TEACHER!

I want to encourage preservice and current educators to continue attending Convocation. The networking and sharing of ideas with fellow educators is invaluable. We can all learn from one another. Every time I attend Convocation, I return home rejuvenated and full of ideas. It is like being a new teacher all over again. Pass the knowledge, continue to share ideas, and show children how much you care about them! See you in Dallas!

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