

My Personal Credo

By John Karahalis

My father came to America not knowing a word of English. It was the start of WWII and my father with his sailing background enlisted in the United States Merchant Marines. After the war and surviving a torpedo attack that sunk his ship he arrived home. He soon married, settled down and had three sons five years apart; I, being son # 2.

The purpose of this brief background was to introduce the roots of my personal philosophy regarding my beliefs and values. My father, as well as my mother instilled in my brothers and me the importance of an education. Unable to attend higher education my father made sure we all graduated college. The concept of blue vs. white collars was unknown to him but using my mind for a career instead my body for a job was his ultimate goal. My father did get to see me graduate and wear jackets and ties instead of overalls to work. He didn't need to tell me he was proud of me, I knew.

My earliest experiences were in special education working with children who were diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy with or without mental retardation. What I quickly discovered was that despite the multitude of physical and intellectual challenges these elementary, middle and high school students were faced with they continued to grow both educationally as well as emotionally. Here in lies my inspiration for all my work and personal experiences that came later. When I was able to see students who were able to make strides albeit small ones in some cases I then realized that learning never stops. From the time we breathe our first breath to our last I truly believe that we never stop learning. Being enrolled in St. John's Doctorial Program at my age (I'm not *that* old) only verifies the point. "*You're never too old to learn*". Truer words have never been

spoken in my opinion. I live by that credo today, and will continue to do so as I work with the students in my program and pursue my personal educational goals as well.