



Peter Roberts
Graduate, History

Peter Roberts attended the University of Texas at Austin as a National Merit Scholar, earned a B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Spanish in 2001, and was on the Dean's List his last four semesters. This spring Peter completed an M.A. in History with a focus on Early Modern Europe at California State University, Fullerton while working full time as an editor and high school teacher. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in the same field. He enjoys spending time with his wife and two young children. While at CSUF Peter was a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honor Society, and winner of the 2009 Lawrence B. de Graaf Outstanding Graduate Student award. His paper "Violence as the Voice of the People: Early Reformation Iconoclasm as Negotiation" won the 2010 Ric Miller Prize for Best European History article in *The Welebaethan* journal of history.

Commencement Speech

Hi. It's actually a little funny to me that I'm up here, and here's why. As an undergrad at the University of Texas, I was placed on scholastic probation and nearly kicked out for failing too many classes. That was after two years of majoring in, but not really studying, chemical engineering and pre-med in the hopes of guaranteeing my financial future. I changed my major

to something that I enjoyed, English literature, and ended up on the Dean's List for good grades my last four semesters.

As History majors, you probably don't need me to tell you that it helps to study what interests you. But based on my experience, I would encourage especially those of you graduating with your Bachelor's today—don't write off grad school just because your undergraduate career may have been less than stellar. If, as I was, you aren't sure about a Ph.D., a Master's is a good way to test the water and can be a solid stepping-stone to the next level. Feel free to work a few years before you get serious about it—but keep it in the back of your mind as a way not only to move up the pay scale but more importantly to become better at your job, to enrich your knowledge of the world, and simply to face and conquer a new challenge. Someone once told me that you're not old until you stop learning, and I for one don't plan to ever get old.

My thesis committee, Dr. Nancy Fitch, Dr. Joe Gonzalez from Liberal Studies, and particularly Dr. Gayle Brunelle, made my time here especially rewarding. I was a little intimidated at first by Dr. Brunelle because I had heard that she was tough. But it didn't take long to realize that she has an incredibly broad expertise and the ability and willingness to pass on as much of that expertise as students are willing to absorb. Now I'm convinced that tough professors are the best—they expect more of students because they expect and give more of themselves.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my wife, Monique, who was gracious beyond measure in forgiving and covering my shortcomings as a husband and father during the nights and weekends spent researching and writing. She and our two kids, Benjamin and Isabelle, never stop amazing me and supporting me with their unconditional love. Thank you.