

*Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
Graduation Speech Given by
Inspector General Brian D. Miller on October 29, 2009*

Thank you for that kind introduction. And, thank you for the fine job that you've done overseeing the completion of this class. I would also like to recognize and thank Angela Hrdlicka and the rest of the FLETC staff for their dedication, their commitment, and the hard work that they put into this course. I would also like to recognize the investigators and training staff, here, who work so hard to run this excellent program. You do a fine job, and we all owe you a debt of gratitude.

Let me also say thank you to the family members of these graduates. Thank you for your support, your sacrifice, and the crucial roles you play in these agents' lives – and will play in their careers in law enforcement.

To you graduates, Congratulations! This is quite an accomplishment. It's not easy. You have all accomplished something remarkable, something you and your families should be proud of. Without doubt, the work you will be doing as a Special Agent can involve risk. It can sometimes be dangerous, and it is not for everyone. This profession which you have chosen requires a special combination of courage, common sense, and sound judgment. Your instructors believe you possess all of these qualities, or you wouldn't be sitting here today. Each one of you has what it takes to succeed in this special line of work. And you are now

armed with the skills and charged with the responsibility to make our Country a safer place to live.

I would like especially to congratulate those of you who received awards. I am proud of the quality of Special Agents we have, here, joining the inspector general and law enforcement community. I am doubly proud that Steve Lobaugh from our office, the Office of Inspector General for GSA, won an academic prize. Congratulations, you are quite a talented group.

I am sure that you will be a credit to our federal law enforcement community. As a Special Agent, you represent the entire federal law enforcement community. You might be the first Special Agent that many people will ever meet. Sometimes you will be the only Special Agent, that person will ever meet. That person's image of federal law enforcement will hinge on the impression you make. Make no mistake about it, you will be scrutinized. Your conduct -- both on and off duty -- will be scrutinized by the public and others. And they will expect a lot. All of us who serve the public are held to a higher standard of conduct. The bar is set very high for all of us in public service, as it should be.

That doesn't mean, though, that you will never make mistakes. We all do that. But I keep in mind something that a former United States Attorney told the office when she was sworn in. She said, "There is no problem that cannot be fixed." We all make mistakes. It's important to know what to do about them. Just

let your supervisors know and we can fix it. She also said that the sooner you let her know, the easier it is to fix. As a new AUSA, I thought that was very good advice and more than a little comforting. And that advice has helped me. I try to be quick to admit my mistakes, so we can fix them.

And I have seen this principle at work. I had a case You didn't think you would escape a war story from a former prosecutor, did you?? The USA's office in West Virginia had just put away the biggest drug kingpin in its history. But soon after the kingpin began serving his life sentence, he found out that the lead agent for the task force had been having a sexual relationship with his wife all throughout the investigation and trial. The kingpin then filed motions to set aside the verdict and to throw out the case based on the misconduct of the Government. The judge recused the USA's office, and DOJ asked me to lead a team of AUSAs from another district to "fix it." This was really bad misconduct, and there was more that I can tell you afterwards. But we empanelled a special grand jury, and through the incredibly hard work of Special Agent Jim Balcom from the DEA, we not only preserved the life sentences for the kingpin and his crew, but we also added charges and convictions. And I tell that war story because it shows that no matter how bad the mistake is, it can always be fixed. If those mistakes could be fixed, then surely our mistakes can also be fixed. I know I take comfort in that and you should too.

At DOJ, we had a saying, “The United States wins when justice prevails.” It’s good to keep that in mind. Not everyone is a bad guy, though there are many of them out there. It is just as important to exonerate the innocent as it is to make the case against the guilty. You should go only as far as the facts take you. No further, but no less! But you should never hesitate to go where the facts lead. You must aggressively pursue the bad guys. And you should never ever go beyond the facts. You may know that someone is dirty, but unless you have the facts to prove it, you have to let him or her go. You’ll get them next time. And believe me, there will be a next time, especially if they think they are getting away with it. It’s just not worth the insult to your integrity or to the justice system to go further than the facts. The system will work and you will get them eventually. Remember, you always have to do the right thing.

Congratulations, now, you have made it. You will have the best job in the world. Not only will you have the opportunity to analyze documents, which I like, but you will get to break down doors and arrest people --- and put your lives on the line for the rest of us! You will have incredible careers. Special Agents have all the fun!

And there is no better time to be a Special Agent. With the Recovery Act, more Federal money is going out faster than ever before in our history. Whenever Federal money goes out fast, there is fraud. You can count on it. One Senator

remarked, “. . . we are opening up the floodgates to fraud.” Unscrupulous individuals and companies will try to take advantage of the stimulus money. And we will need you as Special Agents to stop them, to investigate them, and bring those criminals to justice. The American public is counting on you as Special Agents. We are counting on you to find fraud and prosecute those unscrupulous individuals.

This is your time. Enjoy it. Live up to the high standards that come with it. And serve the public well. Congratulations and good luck!