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RCPB Scholarship 2015

The Importance of Higher Education

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March 9, 1832, Sangamo County, Illinois, was a time of anticipation for the citizens of New Salem. Candidates for political office began to announce the launch of their campaigns for the Illinois General Assembly. Among them, a young, tall and ambitious 23 year old man by the name of Abraham Lincoln was making his very own announcement to run for office. While the announcement in its entirety is a testament to the man who would someday become the savior of a nation, his thoughts on education were as ambitious as his future as a prominent Politian. In his announcement, published in the *Sangamo Journal*, young Lincoln states that,

*“Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in.”*

In a time when the United States of America was still considerably young, many Americans considered education minute compared to the task of running a farm, a small business or maintaining any type of job that established an income for their families. Of course, today this line of thinking has changed dramatically. What used to be looked upon as a secondary life objective, higher education has now become the top priority for every family in the United States. In light of the issues and the advances of today’s world, higher education has become the most important aspect of my life and the lives of countless individuals across the planet.

*“The philosophy of the schoolroom in one generation is the philosophy of government in the next.”* This quote, again by Abraham Lincoln, is a reflection of why I believe education is so important. Over the past 10 years alone, a great culture war has taken place throughout the United States. If today’s generation is tomorrow’s leaders, then the things we do and learn today

will certainly influence the policies of tomorrow. As a political science major, I am confident that the education I receive from the University of Florida will help me become a better leader and become better equipped to handle the dense political pressures I will face both domestically and abroad. However, there are many who do not seek to lead in politics, but instead seek to lead by other means. For example, some choose to pursue an education to become a leader in agriculture, some in business and others, perhaps, in astrophysics. Whatever the educational path, many will find themselves leaders in their own right, especially with a degree in higher education.

In conclusion, John F. Kennedy once stated in Proclamation 3422, establishing the National Education Week, "Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our Nation."