

Do your best

As the school year draws to a close throughout the state and the country, this seems a good time to pause and reflect on what education means to the student, the parent and the world.

Education, a vital ingredient in the social fabric of this country, recently has come under heavy fire as having failed in its duty to provide top-quality learning for its students. Alaska, in its unique location, and because of its peoples' wishes, has been more fortunate, we believe, in this respect, although how much more fortunate we don't know.

However, education as a quantified, qualified and organized group is not the subject of this editorial. We seek to only speak to the student and the parent.

Those of you graduating from high school and college have undoubtedly heard much rhetoric about new beginnings, far horizons, or the fact that you are the future of this village, or city, or state or country. We hope the very repetitiveness of such rhetoric doesn't in any way diminish your enthusiasm toward the future, because we believe in the validity of such statements, however they may be expressed.

Regardless of the path you pursue, whether it be as a carpenter or as a doctor, as a dog-musher or as a president, your ultimate success will come from your willingness to work at and for what you want to do in life.

Your ultimate success will come not from how much money you make, nor how much power you wield, nor how many people you impress.

Your ultimate success will come from your own unspoken voice saying: "I have done a job well."

To the parent: your fledglings are leaving the nest for the first time. Many and often will be the times they will fall to the ground after trying to take to the air on their own. They will learn to fly much faster if they are shown the way, not be pecking but by loving, not be leaving them to their own devices, but by showing them how.

You have demonstrated patience and wisdom and strength to them in the past. Continued demonstration will soon result in the fledgling soaring to great heights, perhaps beyond even those heights you have reached.

Be happy for and with them.

Finally, education is a life-long pursuit, as important to the parent as to the student. Continue the search for knowledge and wisdom.

Retain your ability to be awed by the beauty of a sunrise, or to be enraged by injustice perpetrated upon anyone, or to be moved to tears of happiness or sadness, or to be humble in the presence of wisdom and knowledge possessed by Elders.

What evolves then, is that the best parent is also the best student, in the continuum some call education and others call life.