

Class of 2003



John D. Kemp '74 ... an inspiration



It is hard to imagine anyone with a more powerful, positive, upbeat outlook on life than John D. Kemp, a 1974 graduate of Washburn University School of Law. His law career is one of remarkable success. A principal in the firm of Powers Pyles Sutter & Verville PC in

Washington, DC, he has a federal law and legislative practice in the areas of disability, rehabilitation, health care and nonprofit organizations. In May, Mr. Kemp came home to Washburn to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Law degree and to speak at the Washburn Law graduation ceremony.

"Washburn University is my family, and it's your family, too!" he told the graduates.

Mr. Kemp's achievements would be significant for anyone, but they are all the more remarkable in his case because he manages to accomplish so much despite severe physical disabilities. Born with no arms below the elbows and no legs below the knees, he uses four prostheses. His intelligence and quick wit, often used to ease the discomfort of people who don't know how to react to his disability, are unbounded. Prior to his current practice, Mr. Kemp held a number of leadership positions including:

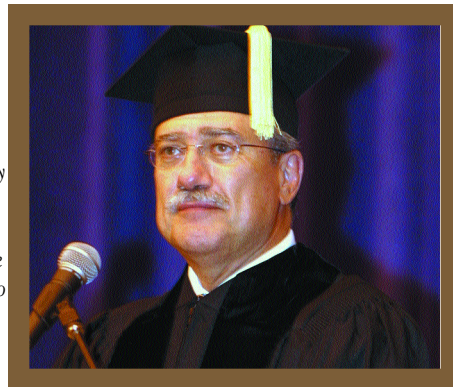
- chief executive officer of United Cerebral Palsy Associations;
- president and CEO of VSA Arts, an international organization that provides learning opportunities through the arts for persons with disabilities, especially children and youth;
- general counsel and vice president-development for the National Easter Seal Society; and
- partner in Kemp & Young, Inc., a company that developed management training programs, offered consulting services, and edited and published Disability & Employment Reporter, a monthly legal and legislative newsletter for employers.

"If you don't give your very best, you are compromising your values, compromising your efforts and compromising your time."

He has also served on boards of directors for several nonprofit organizations including:

- Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago;
- National Rehabilitation Hospital, Washington, DC;
- American Association of People with Disabilities, which he co-founded and currently serves as president;
- The Abilities Fund;
- Half the Planet Foundation; and
- Independent Sector, the national unifying voice for philanthropy and volunteerism in America.

He was a presidential appointee to the National Council on Disability for six years ending in 2002. In 1991, Mr. Kemp was inducted into the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, an honor extended to singularly accomplished individuals in recognition of their achievements in the face of extraordinary challenges.



A message for the graduates

Mr. Kemp's speech at Washburn was just one among the 20-30 major addresses he gives annually at conferences, conventions, and annual meetings. Speaking from his years of experience in the non-profit arena, he reminded the graduates that working as an attorney in service to others brings many opportunities to be engaged with corporate and tax law; contracts and compliance concerns; human resources; pensions and benefits problems; bonds and other long-term debt instruments; marketing, communications and fund-raising; and legislative and regulatory affairs. "Throughout, you operate with an overlay of emotion, speaking for the politically powerless, the voiceless, the voteless. This is the business of nonprofits, always with a heart," he said.

"Each of you is now an advocate, and each of you will have many different ways you can serve," he said. "I'm asking you and I'm telling you...don't waste your time just playing in the sandbox of life. Commit to making something good and productive and meaningful happen every day, and then do it!"

Mr. Kemp left graduates with these following thoughts:

- Your reputation is the most important asset you have. Protect it!
- When you commit to do something, see it all the way through. Or don't commit to it at all.
- It takes years to build up trust and it only takes a minutes worth of stupidity to destroy it. Be wise.
- Exceed peoples expectations of you and for you and not by placing the threshold too conveniently low.

Kemp finished with a quote from Herb Boeckmann, a 1995 Horatio Alger Award recipient. "If you don't give your very best, you are compromising your values, compromising your efforts and compromising your time."

Graduation '03

A. Pamela Prichard and Dean Dennis R. Honabach



B. Stephanie Bunten and family



C. L to r: Tina Murphy Huntington, Lori Lei Jensen-Theobald and Renee Leeds McDaniel



D. Prof. David Ryan leading the graduate procession



E. Post-graduation reception for graduates and their families



F. Brad Laurent and family



Graduation '03



A. Dean Dennis R. Honabach, John D. Kemp '74 and Dr. Jerry Farley, President, Washburn University

B. Richard Schoenfeld

C. Gabriela Vega



D. Jonni Wainwright

E. L to r: Prof. Michael Kaye, Ted Griffith '01, Katherine King-Walker '03, Prof. Greg Pease, Katherine's father and husband Alan

F. John D. Kemp '74 and family