

## Speech Delivered by Senior Stacey Fernandez at Partners in Excellence Banquet Oct. 2, 2009

Good afternoon! I cannot believe that this is my fourth Partners in Excellence Banquet - it seems like just yesterday I was receiving the amazing, life altering, news that I was to be awarded a presidential scholarship. Had I not been a scholarship recipient, I probably would have had to attend school in my home state of WV, where majoring in dance education would not have been an option. My Radford education has allowed me to dance and to have a career that I am extraordinarily passionate about, and without the financial assistance I received through the Foundation, my attendance at Radford would not have been possible.



Benefactors - I cannot even begin to thank you enough for your support and generosity. You have given every student here today the momentous gift of education. It is amazing to me how the simple kindness of one person can affect so many, and as we enter our adult careers, I only hope that we may pass along the kindness you have shown us to help others in need. You are truly an inspiration to every student here, and I am honored to have the opportunity to thank you for your continuous support.

New Scholarship Recipients - CONGRATULATIONS! You should be so proud of all you have accomplished already. Enjoy your time at Radford, and make use of every opportunity you have been given because, trust me, four years go by entirely too fast! Use these college years to learn, not only about your major, but about life. Meet as many new people as you can, and while you're making the most out of your college careers, remember your benefactors - the people sitting with you at these tables - the people that have made all of this possible.

I know that my graduation in May will be extremely bittersweet. The past four years have truly been the best four years of my life. The dance department's faculty and students have become my family, and they've taught me more than I could have ever imagined. My time at Radford has been irreplaceable.. but at the same time, I'm so excited to see where I end up 5, 10, or even 20 years from now, and I am confident that my education at Radford has prepared me for whatever is next. Thank you - Partners In Excellence - for giving me, and all these other exceptional students, an amazing college experience!