

21 December 2009

Dear Friends,

As all of you now know, Tony McGeorge has departed as President of Valley Forge Military Academy and College. His 3+ years were marked by significant staff turnover, a great deal of anger by Alumni and others, and a continued decay of the institution that many once considered the greatest private military academy in the United States.

Many of us have stated that, as long as Tony McGeorge was there, we would withhold financial support until he left. He is gone now. And, while we do not know what the immediate future holds in terms of his replacement or the direction of the school, a promise is a promise. It is a matter of honor now, not only to make good on that pledge of support, but also to keep Valley Forge available for the next generation of Alumni.

Resuming financial support also has another, equally important benefit. It sends a powerful message to the Board of Trustees and Alumni Association's Board of Directors. While there were repeated statements from the school that the Tony McGeorge detractors were merely "a few disgruntled Alumni," we all know that the reality was, and is, very different. Over a thousand Alumni, parents and friends of Valley Forge have voiced their concerns about Tony's leadership this past year. Since news of his departure broke on Friday morning, the numerous websites, blogs, private communications, and public responses to the news that there will be a new senior administration has more than demonstrated that Valley Forge's Alumni care deeply about the direction in which their *Alma Mater* should go. Thus, providing the financial support we withheld during those years of unrest and unhappiness is a tangible demonstration that the Trustees finally made the right decision.

It also provides another important chance for the collective voice of Alumni to be heard. The Board of Trustees, and most especially the search committee that will identify a new president of Valley Forge, is clearly on notice. They no longer have the luxury of making a poor choice and expecting that Alumni simply will go along with a bad decision. The Alumni can be a powerful force, but only if they ensure that their actions follow their words. Financial support, either made or withheld, can be a powerful motivator for a struggling institution. Words alone will not drive change or help Valley Forge endure.

So, as we come to the close not only of this year, but also of an administration marked by rancor and discord, it is time to think of the future. **Things at the Forge are far from perfect, but this past week's news is a dramatic step towards ensuring the longevity of our *Alma Mater*.** We hope that you can join those of us who have made the decision to renew our financial support to keep this wonderful institution alive so that, once again, it will be the greatest private military academy in the United States.

Thank you.

W. Thomas Sykes '50
Ronad E. Tschiegg '52

Richard F. Forno '90 '92C
John R. ('74JC) and Susan M.S. Rapp