

I was 25 years old when I began at Lakewood, now Century College, a refugee from the Region of Gary, Indiana. And I came here because I could not take it anymore.

I could not take scraping asbestos... for ten hours a day in plastic sealed rooms 'til my arms hung like ballast on hot air balloons. Or driving newspaper trucks until dawn, sleepless and worn, attentiveness gone. But My Damascus road brought me here... and when the academic advisor asked what I wanted to study, I said, ANYTHING!

I did not know
where I was called to go
but I believed that the vehicle to take me there was the accessible system of higher education in Minnesota.

And, this college welcomed me, and believed that a blue-collar laborer, somewhat reprobate, could overcome lost years and like Saul, be reconstructed into a vessel... a citizen of value.

Near the end of my Associate's degree, however I realized that this college had tricked me.

I'd been hoodwinked.

For as a child of the working class, I thought the aim of a college degree was only to be more money.

But these books! These ideas! They messed me up! And who I was... and who I was to become.

For when I'd graduated with Highest Honor from this institution; and *Summa Cum Laude* from the next, money no longer drew me;

And when I'd received a Master's Degree and teaching awards, it was not a larger paycheck that moved me;

And though I've completed a PhD
engaged in acts of notoriety
toward Century College I will always be
bitter
and grateful.

It took this man who only wanted to change his job, and made him realize that
what he really wanted was to change his world.

To the Century professors who nurtured me
and the taxpayers who fund this institution: I honor you. For Century College is
a place that is powerful and divine.