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**“The future is not preparing for you, but you have to prepare for the future.”**

*Governor Lemanu gives keynote speech at the Nu'uuli Vocational-Technical High School Graduation.*

Public high schools continued their graduation season with the Nu'uuli Vocational-Technical (VocTech) high school today, where Governor Lemanu was the keynote speaker. VocTech focuses on preparing the high school graduates with the basic foundation of a "trade" of their choice to continue pursuing at the collegiate level. As the Territory's only trade high school, it produces unique skill sets and tracks graduates into the ASG labor workforce. Specifically in the Department of Public Works, American Samoa Power Authority, and the American Samoa Telecommunication Authority. It is also the home of the Wildcats.

The Wildcat's vision is to "build a better future" for American Samoa as skilled and self-directed learners. Their mission is to build "a rigorous academic and technical foundation to be productive and successful citizens."

"Today is full of happiness and joy. A morning that you and your families have dreamed about since you began your high school career. Some of you know what tomorrow brings; however, some do not know what you will be doing. Do not second guess yourself. Your families and teachers have equipped you with the basic skills you will need to begin adulthood. They have spent the last ten or more years preparing you for this moment," stated Governor Lemanu in his opening statement. He continued, "I ask you one thing. Please, whatever you end up pursuing in life, please, do not forget. Do not forget your parents, villages, family, and spiritual leaders. Do not forget their sacrifices and love they have for getting you this far." He

then led the graduates in a song of thanksgiving as a tribute to parents, families, and teachers.

Governor Lemanu reminded them that from now on, as an adult, there will be no more teachers reminding them of how to prepare for the next day. He also advised them that their parents will not remind them of their responsibilities and that they will need to take charge of their lives and future.

"Do not worry about the future," Governor Lemanu stated, "the future is not preparing for you, but you have to prepare for the future. The future of your families, villages, churches will depend on how well prepared you are."

He quoted Mark Twain by saying, "Find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life." He continued, "I encourage you to keep searching, keep seeking for your purpose and stay true to your vision. If an opportunity does not present itself, make one. If a door does not open, build one. If an idea does not exist, create one. We are all behind you. Build a better future for yourselves, your families, your villages, your churches, and your island. We will be here supporting you every step of the way."

Governor Lemanu closed with a story of how his Faith got him through his military career, specifically during deployments to Iraq. "During my military career. Many of the soldiers and those whom we served with during the War, they did not pray. They did not have as much Faith as the Samoan soldiers. We would pray six to seven times a day. You do not have to ask for permission to carry out your Faith. My challenge for you is to stay strong and continue to pray. Continue to build a better future for your family, your villages, your churches, and your island."

Finally, he reminded the graduating class that they now represent American Samoa in the next phase of their journey. He wished them Godspeed on their future endeavors and to always be the best.

Governor Lemanu will be the keynote speaker at the Tafuna High School graduation on June 8th, 2021.

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