

# Dean's Letter to the Class of 1984: Livingston Undergoing 'Teenage Growth Pains'

*W. Robert Jenkins, dean of Livingston College, wrote the following letter to the Class of 1984, included in the college yearbook, [Strength Through Diversity](#).*

Dear Graduate:

Livingston College has not yet reached the age of fifteen and might well be called a teenager since we have been faced with characteristic childhood and teenage growth pains. As with teenagers, we are still not quite mature and are still establishing our identity. That identity is based on the goals of our College as stated in the revised mission statement issued by the Livingston College Assembly in the Fall, 1983 semester.

In that statement, we confirm our belief in the future, realizing that the College's future lies within all those who are closely connected with it. As a College, we offer access and hope to many who might otherwise be denied such an opportunity. Our academic and non-academic challenges provide each of you with an opportunity to reach decisions based on the knowledge of others and your own life experiences. The Livingston College Fellows and administrators think an education ought to be what we have provided you and will provide students who follow you.

During your college years, you have formed friendships and have learned to have respect for different ideas and for individuals of different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. That, too, is one of our goals. That effort has been a success and you are the proof of that success. Keep this important perspective in mind in all of your future activities.

Now that you leave Livingston College, we know that we are part of each other. You have meant much to me in many ways and I have a deep personal affection for each of you. After you have left, I urge that you keep the Livingston spirit alive and your associations intact. With you as our graduates and with the participation of students yet to come, Livingston College will emerge from its teen years as a mature and dynamic adult. Good luck to each and every one of you.

With fondness,  
W. Robert Jenkins  
Dean