

President Sara's Outgoing Speech
Given at Installation June 1, 2022

Thank you. Before I start, I want to acknowledge the outgoing board and co-chairs. Could you please stand and be recognized?

A few years back, I wondered what it would be like to join an organization like Soroptimist. So, in October 2005, I joined SI Chico. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I had to leave in 2011, but rejoined when Nick and I moved back to Chico in March 2018 (and I rejoined because the Home & Garden Show was sold.) Next year, I approach 10 years with the club.

As I came into my Presidency in 2021, our club, and the rest of the world along with it, was coming out of the pandemic. We had a year of meetings on Zoom, which meant we were basically starting all over with regular club and committee meetings in 2021. I knew that I wanted to focus on the Dream programs and that meant bringing new life to the Dream It, Be It program with a one-day conference and creating a live event, where we as Soroptimists, could connect with the 20-something year old women in the community who needed mentors and leaders. This is where Advocate for Great came to life.

I also thought it would be a good idea to start grad school at the same time that I served as President, because why not? Truly, though, if you want something done, ask a busy woman. It's not been an easy year for me, but it has been immensely fulfilling.

A few weeks ago, I started wrapping up my year-end reports and writing the to-do list for the end of the year, like any busy woman knows how to do – to-do lists. I had almost everything checked off of my Soroptimist to-do list, except for this speech. I could not pin down what was the best way to describe how I felt about the year and my Presidency. Then, as I was organizing something else, because as a busy woman I am also a recovering procrastinator, I had the epiphany I needed to write this speech.

First, I need to take you back to the beginning of this spring semester. It started when, again as the hyper-organized doer that I am, bought all the required texts for the two classes I was taking this semester. Problem was, two of the books were wrong! What!! Are you kidding me??? I was able to return one book no problem (and thank God for that. It cost $140!) The other one I kept and ordered the correct book from Amazon for $15. (I love me some ordering on Amazon!) The book was called *Legacy: What the All Blacks can Teach Us About the Business of Life* by James Kerr. I will add a side note here that I highly recommend this book to everyone. This book talked about the New Zealand rugby team called the All Blacks, so called for their all black jersey donned with a silver fern leaf. I learned a lot about leading, learning, and rugby, too.

Without giving an entire lesson from the book (we spent seven weeks on it in class), I want to pass on some of the tidbits that stuck out to me that I feel translate to what I was trying to achieve over this past year in the club.

When the All Blacks line up before the game starts, the opposing team face what is called the *haka*. The *haka* is a highly ritualized challenge that the Māori call up their ancestors to aid in the struggle that is about to be undertaken. This *haka* is a reminder that life is fragile, and we all have little time here on earth to do what we need to do. *This is our time.*

The book covered what made the All Blacks the most winning team in rugby history, if not in any sport. Each All Black has a place, and his place is intricately intertwined with one another. Each leader and rookie take responsibility for keeping the locker room neat and clean, adapt to changing times, and played with purpose. They sacrifice and work hard through tough plays and practices, take responsibility, learn from their environment and each other, and accept each other as family. Each team member knows the expectations of the coach, the team, and their captain. When things go sideways in a game, they keep it real and keep a blue level head. They ritualize their enterprise by using the *haka* to reconnect with their purpose and core culture. They have a language all their own so as to create a legacy. One of my favorite quotes from the book I can't actually say out loud here, but I will share this. The All Blacks seek to "Leave the jersey in a better place." "Champions do extra" is another favorite from the book.

I think both quotes resonate as a Soroptimist. We do extra so that we can leave a legacy. I think this year in particular was all about our legacy. Soroptimist International turned 100 years old on October 3, 2021. Our club turned 92 years old in January. I am the first woman to serve as President who had two women from her own family serve before her. I truly feel that we are leaving a legacy on this community.

Which brings me to one of my other favorite parts of the book – "Pass the Ball". Leaders are created in this club. I am excited to pass the ball to our next leaders and watch our club create the V formation like you see in geese flying overhead. We all are moving in the same direction together as a unit. Some club members work harder against the wind for a short time until the next leader steps up. This is our *wh*ānau, our family, our club, our legacy.

Kathy, this is your time to lead the spearhead. I get this opportunity to pass on some Soroptimist legacy to you. I present you with the gavel, our City of Chico 100-year Proclamation, and the necklace from our sister club SI St. Alban's, which was gifted to our club on June 22, 1980, when seven members of St. Alban's came to visit Chico. I also present you with the official SI Chico President's pin. Congratulations on the start of your legacy!