



Patrick Kennedy Addresses Invisible Wounds at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology Commencement

Urges Graduates to Advance a New Civil Rights Movement for Those Suffering from Mental Illness and Neurological Disorders



CHICAGO, July 6, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy delivered an impassioned [speech](#) to an audience of over 3,000, including 500 graduates, at [The Chicago School of Professional Psychology](#) Commencement on June 10, 2011, in Chicago. Kennedy, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 2011, received an honorary degree from the institution for his tireless efforts in support of mental health research and services. Kennedy also sponsored and led the fight for passage of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008, which provides access to mental health treatment for tens of millions of Americans who were previously denied care.

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"The signature wound of the war against terrorism is an invisible wound," said Kennedy, addressing the issues of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder afflicting U.S. service members and veterans. "Soldiers are being left behind in our midst . . . we should not rest until we bring them back not only in body but in mind . . . We can do better for our nation's veterans."

The Chicago School is no stranger to efforts to address the mental health issues of service members and their families. Part of an institution focused on service learning and committed to civic engagement, students and faculty have developed and/or assist in numerous support efforts for the military, veterans, and their families. The School's Chicago Campus recently hosted a meeting with Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden, the Illinois National Guard, and other support organizations as a part of Dr. Biden and First Lady Michelle Obama's [Joining Forces Initiative](#).

Kennedy's recent work in the [One Mind for Research Campaign](#) extends beyond the military to anyone struggling with a mental illness or neurological disorder. Bringing together prominent neuroscientists, representatives from government, advocacy groups and the pharmaceutical industry, the Campaign recently released a 10-year plan for neuroscience research and funding. The goals of the plan include developing public and private partnerships to share research in order to make progress on addressing brain disorders—from schizophrenia to traumatic brain injury. Fear and ignorance around these disorders, said Kennedy during his commencement speech, produces discrimination, prejudice and stigma, marginalizing millions of Americans. Indeed, he said, stigma is one of the reasons that there has not been a stronger commitment to fund research on mental illness and neurological disorders.

Harkening back to his Uncle John F. Kennedy's advancement of civil rights in the 1960s, Rep. Kennedy called for a new civil rights movement to treat every person in this country with the dignity and respect they deserve. By separating mental illness from other diseases of the body, he said, we fail to treat the whole person—and marginalize those we are most trying to help. "We can't have a *mental* health system, he said, "we need a *health* system that has mental health as a part of it."

"I never imagined I would see this many people in one room who were willing to raise their hand and say they cared about mental illness," said Kennedy. "If there was ever a time to go into a field that is more exciting, you haven't picked a better one. The discoveries are just starting to take place. The ability to finally be able to treat the whole person has arrived. And you all are going to be the ones that carry that message."

An apt call to action for the next generation of psychologists and counselors.

Click [here](#) to see Kennedy's full speech at the June 10, 2011, commencement of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. TCSPPP President Dr. Michele Nealon-Woods' charge to the graduates is available [here](#).

About The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

Founded in 1979, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPPP) is the nation's leading nonprofit graduate school dedicated exclusively to the applications of psychology and related behavioral sciences. The school is an active member of the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology, which has recognized TCSPPP for its distinguished service and outstanding contributions to cultural diversity and advocacy. The school's community service initiatives have resulted in three consecutive years of recognition on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, including the additional "With Distinction" honor in 2010. The Chicago Campus was one of three institutions in Illinois to receive the 2010 Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Campuses are located in Chicago; in Los Angeles, Westwood, and Irvine, California; and the newest campus in Washington, D.C. [Doctoral psychology programs](#) and [masters psychology programs](#) are offered on-ground and in an online-blended format.

For more information about The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, visit www.thechicagoschool.edu. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/gradpsychology. Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/thechicagoschool.

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