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The Avoidance of Mediocrity
By
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On the Occasion of the Receipt of
The Clarence E. Shaffrey, S.J., Award
St. Joseph's University
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This lecture was given during the time I was Surgeon General, but out of uniform, in Philadelphia, speaking as a private citizens and making all of those facts clear to the audience to which I delivered this address.

The lecture begins in a light vein and gives some anecdotes that I thought were humorous, that I encountered in the wearing of the uniform, as well as some anecdotes about my life before becoming a pediatric surgeon that might have influenced my career. The theme of The Avoidance of Mediocrity is one that I used many times in many venues and it fit particularly this audience very well. This was a Christian audience and I was talking about vocation vs. avocation and I made it clear that in my opinion, one must earn the right in his vocation – mine was medicine – a Christian witness.