**Florida DECA State VP Speech Justin Degen**

Hello FL DECA, I’m **Justin Degen**, a hopeful candidate from South Plantation high school, running to be one of **our** chartered association vice presidents.

Certain experiences in high school have groomed me into the person standing here before you today. As a freshman, I was barely over 5 feet and weighed 100 pounds, if that, so when I tried out for the basketball team most people overlooked me I started off as the “team manager”.

As the season approached I worked hard, ***going*** to the gym every morning at 5 am to show that I deserved a spot on the team. With less than a minute left in the first half of our first game, to everyone's surprise the coach called my name to play. You know how you have that one memory, that you will cherish forever? (pause) Well, that was mine because someone finally gave me an opportunity. I went from manager to ***later becoming the captain of the team****.* That night I learned a lesson: time, is what you make of it.

I used the same determination by pleading day after day for the first 3 weeks of my freshman year to get a spot in the already full DECA program offered at my school. 1 year, 6 months, and 20 days later I now stand in front of you, Florida DECA, ***wanting*** to be one of our chartered association vice presidents.

Getting onto the basketball team ***seemed*** unlikely but I wasn't giving up, I was willing to put in the time, I made the team. Getting into DECA seemed unlikely. I wasn’t giving up hope, time after time I pleaded for a spot, I got into DECA. Perseverance, persistence, and passion paid off.

Despite the naysayers, I achieved what others thought would be impossible. It has occurred to me, never give up on a dream, with extra effort, hard work, and time the dream becomes reality.

Two individuals who saw their dream come true, Bill Gates and Paul Allen dropped out of college and formed the fortune 500 company, Microsoft.

As a teenager, Gates fed his programming addiction by sneaking out after his curfew to use the local University’s computer. Gates and Allen put in thousands of hours perfecting their craft so when the time came to launch Microsoft, the two were ready to take the world by storm.

While still an unknown high school rock band, the Beatles were booed off stage numerous times in local concerts. But by the time they arrived on the scene in America the Beatles had played over 1,200 concerts, most bands don’t play that many concerts in their entire careers.

I want to bring the same level of persistence, passion, and hard work for the betterment of Florida DECA.

My platform is comprised of the 3R’s: Raise Awareness, Recognize opportunities, and Respond to concerns. It is not just my dream, but my mission to achieve these campaign goals with you, Florida DECA. As a chartered association officer, I aspire to provide you with a DECA experience that will have you share the same love for DECA as I do. I will cherish every opportunity given to me.

When voting tomorrow, please keep in mind, A vote for Justin Degen is a vote for **perseverance**. A vote for **persistence**. And a vote for **passion**. You are **just-in** **time;** to give me the opportunity to lead you Florida DECA, to new heights. Thank you