College graduates are having a tough time finding jobs. The economy is terrible, employers are not hiring for fear of worsening financial conditions, the federal government is over-regulating everything, and the employment outlook today is unfortunately bleak.

I can still hear my high school football coach, Sammy Glorioso, admonishing us during a particularly tough practice. “Men, tough times don’t last. Tough people do.” The tough economic times we are enduring will not last forever, but, still, young people entering college must use good judgment in choosing a college major.

Let me be specific. If you are a young person fortunate enough to enter college, you must select what you are going to do with the rest of your life with extreme care.

There are individuals with Ph.D.’s who are in the unemployment line. There are workers who have only an associate degree who have good jobs, and there is a reason.

The first step is to determine what you really want to do with your working life. What is it that you really enjoy doing? What gets you excited? What would you like to do to earn a living that seems more like fun than work? What is it that would cause you to devote a great deal of your time learning to do?

These are great questions to ask especially during an economic boom period. But today, you may have to bite the bullet and look for a field of work that is not as exciting but the demand for employees is there. The second step is to ask, “What must I do to pay the bills?” This is a serious and important question. The job you eventually get will determine your life style and your standard of living. Will I be able to support a family on my salary? What about future growth? Will the job I have now be around ten years from now?

Even with the economic recession playing havoc with the job market, America is changing rapidly. In the past, an employee could expect to stay at one job for his entire career. Some families produced sons that followed in their dads’ footsteps. Those days are gone. The average life expectancy of a company today is only about 25 years, and then something replaces it or the company goes out of business. Today’s employee must be flexible – and willing to learn new and sometimes complicated things.

I had one mom tell me recently that her son, a recent college graduate, had moved back home. I asked her what his major was and she told me that it was “International Studies.” She then went on to tell me that he was now in “food service.” I asked her what was “food service,” and

she told me that he was waiting tables down at a restaurant less than a mile from her home. This young man was bright. His mom and dad sent him all over the world during his college career so that he would have a profound understanding of “International Studies.” Fifty thousand dollars later, with all of his knowledge of the international community, he was waiting tables at a local diner. He could have accomplished this mission the day he graduated high school.

My advice to young high school graduates is to choose a college major that will make you a living. If you understand computers, major in computers. All of us will be dealing with computers for the rest of our natural lives. If you are smart enough to get into the medical field, this field is still growing and needs skilled doctors, nurses, physical therapist, occupational therapist, pulmonary technicians, and technicians of all types.

Majors that I would run from are some of the following: International Studies, Art Appreciation, Art History, Women’s Studies, Minority Studies, Majority Studies, Archeology, Medieval History, Philosophy, Theater, Voice, Band, Speech and all of the other non-productive majors offered at our public colleges. Major is something where your knowledge and skill can be turned into cold hard cash. I am not suggesting that you never take any of the courses that I have mentioned, but take them under advisement. They will not feed your family.

Finally, college tuition is much too high. At some point, the law of supply and demand will take over, and major colleges will notice that community colleges are doing a better job of preparing students for gainful employment than they are. Remember, it is the law of supply and demand, not the theory of supply and demand. Laws are more important.

Finally, I wish all of our college bound Yazoo Countians the best of luck and success no matter your college major.