

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, John E. Aymer, Jr., who has been a source of strength, support, patience, and motivation for me throughout this entire experience. I am truly blessed to have you as my partner in this dance called life.

It's You and Me Babe, I Love You So Much!

I also dedicate this to my parents, Beau and Irene Gardon, who have always taught me to keep God first and to strive for excellence. I thank you for your guidance and love.