

COMMENCEMENT 2012

Please return to Jo Graves
Headmaster's Office

WELCOME

Please be seated.

Good Morning.

It is an honor for me to welcome you to St. Andrew's for our 79th graduation ceremony. I want to first thank Mark Hammond, Co-Advisor to the VI Form, for his brilliant talk in Chapel this morning. We are grateful to Mark and Co-VI Form advisor Melinda Tower for their excellent work with this class over the past few years.

We thank Dean of Faculty Tom Fritz and Lisa Henson for their leadership in the preparation and execution of all the details of this beautiful two-day celebration.

Commencement signals the end of a particular stage of academic careers at schools, colleges and universities throughout the nation, and even in an increasingly technological world full of predictions for on-line teaching and virtual learning, the rites of graduation continue to resonate powerfully for families and educational institutions here and around the

world. Families, friends, mentors and alumni gather; faculty process; speakers reflect on the condition, needs and hopes for a more just, peaceful, civic and generous world. And, as the ceremony concludes, families gather for photographs and a few more precious moments of reflection before the business of packing ends a long and emotional day. This process seems more meaningful than an email documenting success at an on-line academy.

These ceremonies bring joy and happiness to the halls of St. Andrew's, for graduation harkens back to our founding, our first graduates and the principles that guided the School from our first days. We gather here each year to marvel at the generosity of those who came before us and to reflect on how the mission has developed, expanded and strengthened in a new complex century.

This wonderful group of parents, guardians, grandparents, friends, alumni and siblings gathered here today on the lawn represent the steadfast support our graduates have felt not only in their days here but throughout their lives. They are here to witness, to celebrate and to continue to inspire you to pursue a good life, one full of purpose, generosity, creativity and

love. We thank you, parents and guardians, for your trust and faith in St. Andrew's.

Seated behind me are trustees and faculty who work so generously to make this remarkable School possible. As the stewards of our distinctive mission, our trustees bring counsel, perspective and wisdom to the School—they help us keep the School sharp, agile, focused and disciplined. Our current Board, led by Chair Kitten Gahagan and President Kent Swezey, is the most exciting and innovative leadership group in my career. We thank our trustees for their dedicated work on our behalf.

Our faculty represent the best in 21st century boarding education, excelling as they do in the art of teaching, mentoring and coaching. The world of education reform cries out today for measurements of educational value, precise calculations of what a teacher adds to the learning of each student in his/her classroom. The education establishment celebrates high stakes testing that seeks to measure not only student learning but also teacher and administrative effectiveness. But, if teaching is an art that demands the highest levels of dedication, wisdom, creativity, patience, optimism and commitment, we need to recognize that such values and

attributes and lessons cannot be calculated or defined or simplified. Great teachers share their minds, spirit, values, hopes and dreams with their students; the result is not performance on a high stakes, multiple-choice exam. The results come as students begin to expand and diversify their perspectives on the world and begin to develop important ways to engage, to contribute and to serve. We would do better to evaluate our schools and colleges by evaluating the quality of our democracy, the intelligence of civic discourse, the creativity of our citizens.

Our faculty do this work well—they challenge our students to become independent, autonomous learners and to develop a desire, willingness and ability to transform the world. This is hard work, complex work, arduous work—it involves teaching day and night; counseling and mentoring on the run, managing complex situations; maintaining poise, judgment and maturity when ordinary people would falter. It means staying up late with an advisee, accompanying a student to the Emergency Room, calling an anxious parent, tutoring a struggling student, going to Wawa day and night. It is what we do; it is what we love.

Please join me in thanking the faculty for their great dedication to this work.

DEPARTING FACULTY

Each year at graduation, we thank departing members of the faculty for their service to the School:

- Jory Kahan will be a great doctor soon, serving patients and the medical profession with the integrity, humanity and passion he has brought to his life at St. Andrew's. Jory is a math teacher, a dorm parent, a coach, an advisor, but most of all, he is an incredible person, a powerful role model for our students. This year, led by a strong group of seniors, Jory and Jay Hutchinson led St. Andrew's boys' soccer back into prominence in the Conference and the State. As Jory leaves us to pursue his medical career, he knows that his spirit, energy and goodness will continue to inspire St. Andrew's.

- I wanted to hire Jen McGowan about five minutes after meeting her for the first time four years ago. She was in the process that spring of leading Hamilton College's Women's Lacrosse to the National Championship, and we all could tell she was simply an unbelievable person—full of faith, intelligence, energy and drive.

So, it shouldn't be surprising that Jen's last days as a coach led to another run at the Girls' State Lacrosse Championship last night. Her team reflected Jen's unusual poise, confidence, grace and courage.

As a math teacher, dorm parent, advisor, coach of cross-country, soccer and lacrosse, Jen has generously shared her life with all of us at St. Andrew's. We wish her the best as she teaches next year at The Hackley School in Tarrytown, New York.

- Sarah Demers – Five and a half years ago, word filtered out of New England that a promising young candidate named Sarah Demers had graciously declined our invitation to interview at St. Andrew's. We had met Sarah in Boston, and we knew we were in the presence of a young woman destined for greatness in the world of education. But, she did not want to visit!

But luckily, a St. Andrew's alumnus circled back to Sarah and told her that despite her certainty that she wanted to teach in public school, she had to at least visit St. Andrew's.

Now five years later, we are both inspired and devastated to say that Sarah Demers will be leaving us to work for the TEAK Foundation, a wonderful organization that provides exemplary educational opportunities for low-income students in New York City.

In those five years, Sarah emerged as a leader and inspirational teacher, coach, colleague and advisor. She has brought her vitality, integrity, goodness, moral courage and passion to every aspect of her life at the School. She has taught English, coached varsity girls' soccer, swimming and lacrosse; she has served as a wise and discerning dorm parent and advisor.

In her remarks to the School two weeks ago, she challenged our students to overcome fear, hesitation, doubt and insecurity by living out and enacting large, generous and audacious lives. We wish Sarah the best as she fulfills this new dream and challenge in her life.

- Cal Hurtt was my soccer captain during his senior year at St. Andrew's—he was an incredible player to coach, for he was so fast, so

daring, so fearless and so physical in his pursuit of the ball or his marking of an opposing forward.

His leadership, maturity and integrity convinced me that he would be a great leader and coach in his professional career. But this vision took a while to unfold. First, he had to make his way through a long, yet unspoken interest and love for a woman named Gretchen Bensinger (a person and alum I also knew I needed to hire). Gretchen was a teacher on the West Coast and we were lucky enough to bring Cal and Gretchen back to St. Andrew's in 2004.

Cal began work in the development office, where he led the increasingly successful and ambitious Annual Fund. Then, he served as Associate Director of Admissions, working closely with Louisa Zendt as we identified promising new students for the School. Soon, Cal joined our Math Department, where he has taught excellent courses in Statistics, Geometry and Algebra I. Cal's coaching has led to great success for JV boys' soccer, boys' varsity squash and girls' varsity crew. This year, his crew finished sixth in the outrageously competitive Stotesbury Regatta.

Flanked by crews that train 12 months a year, St. Andrew's women established themselves as one of the elite crews in the nation.

Cal is now exploring a new career in agriculture, one that luckily will allow him, Gretchen, Liam and Gibson to remain here at St. Andrew's. We thank him for all he has done for his School.

SABBATICALS

We wish Bill and Donna Wallace and Donald Duffy well as they embark on sabbatical year experiences.

RETIRING FACULTY

Two members of our faculty retire this year:

Joyce Nelson, our Registrar, has worked at St. Andrew's for 43 years. She began in 1969, and during her distinguished career, she has contributed in so many ways to the spirit, ambition and integrity of this place. As an Administrative Assistant to the Registrar and as the Registrar for the past 13

years, Joyce has overseen dramatic changes in the administration of the School's academic recordkeeping. Before the age of computers, this work involved the careful documentation by hand of all grades and the creation of report cards with teacher comments pasted on reports. As our School size increased, as the curriculum grew, and as the demands for academic recordkeeping intensified, Joyce has demonstrated complete mastery over every aspect of this work.

What has remained constant through years of technological and institutional change is Joyce's professionalism, warmth, sense of humor and love of the community. Along with her trusted colleague Barb Samson (who has worked along side her for 29 years), Joyce has made the Registrar's office a place where all have felt welcomed: faculty, staff, children, dogs, filter in and out, and Joyce has brought us all together as a community. As a woman who has watched the School move through change, transition, and developments in culture and complexity, Joyce is a keeper of the spirit of this place. Her energy, her work ethic, professionalism and integrity taught us all young and old to do our work well, to do our work promptly, and to make time for one another every day. We will miss her in many, many

ways, and we hope she will visit often. Thank you Joyce for sharing your life with St. Andrew's.

We honor Joyce today by presenting her with a special chair.

* * *

John Higgins has taught math for 32 years at St. Andrew's. In that time, he has served as Registrar, Director of Studies and Math Department Head. He has coordinated course selection, scheduled St. Andrew's classes, directed the School's Elder Hostel Program and coached III level soccer.

He and his wife Lee came to St. Andrew's in 1980-81 as a dynamic teaching team. John established new strength, vitality and versatility in the Math Department. Lee led our Theater Department in new, innovative and creative ways.

After a career at St. Andrew's building a strong theater program, Lee became a superb teacher in the Delaware public school system; she was a trusted and respected educator: so patient, versatile and steadfast in her

commitment to educating children at all ability levels. And as Lee became a leader in the Appoquinimink School District, John became the best math teacher I have ever known.

What was the secret of his genius? First, he loved and honored his students in powerful and compelling ways. He was gracious with encouragement and praise; his students knew that this was a man who was teaching and committing himself to helping students understand. He was an expert in the use of questions, including all students in the work of the seminar. He modeled his deep commitment to the life of the mind by sharing his remarkable knowledge of history and especially the Civil War.

Each Higgins' class was a lesson in logic, in reasoning, in critical reading, in the precise use of language and the art of hypothesizing.

Over his career, he built relationships with students and professors of the University of Delaware. He organized and presented workshops, mentored and advised private and public school math teachers across the state.

John was always ready to do whatever it took to make the School and the Math Department flourish. If he needed to teach five classes, he did it; if he needed to tutor students struggling in other teachers' classes, he did it. If a young member of the department needed mentoring, John was there morning, noon and night. For years, he spent every summer completely committed to making each student's course selection choices work within our schedule. He talked to parents in the most patient, gracious and effective way possible.

Over the past seven years, John has experienced significant health challenges, but throughout these moments, he remained committed to his teaching.

Ultimately, he taught so long and so well and so courageously because he loved the students of St. Andrew's. We would meet every year, check in with one another and agree that no student body rivals the one we have here at this School. So, however he felt, our meetings would end with John saying, "I could do 3 or 4 sections. Actually, put me down for at least 4."

When he fell ill this December, notes, cards, letters, emails poured in from students from the full range of his career.

Today we honor and celebrate John Higgins' career at St. Andrew's.

As I present this chair to Lee, I am proud to read this note John gave me at his home on Tuesday:

Dear St. Andrew's Community,

I am sorry I am unable to join you on this day of celebration marking the graduation of the Class of 2012. I send my best to all of you. Most especially, I wish the Class of 2012 great success in every future endeavor. I want to thank everyone for making my work at St. Andrew's School not merely a job, but a source of great satisfaction and enjoyment. I miss you very much, and I hope to see many of you as I plan to volunteer at St. Andrew's in the fall. Finally, thank you for giving me so much in our shared time at St. Andrew's. I am deeply grateful!

John A. Higgins

STAFF REFLECTIONS

Last night's Awards ceremony and today's graduation reflect the professionalism and dedication of St. Andrew's staff. Whether the work involves the million and one details associated with the planning of such an event, or the preparation each day of our campus, buildings and dorms, or the cultivation of ambitious programs in school administration, college counseling, academic administration, student life, development, financial management and security, the staff do vital work each day and bring such energy vitality and goodness to the School.

I especially thank Lisa Henson for her work organizing the Commencement Program.

We thank and recognize the following members of the staff who leave or retire this year: Sandy Bailey, Jack Bradley, Fran Holveck and Bill Bright.

25-Year Anniversary Medal – Eric Kemer

We have two St. Andrew's teachers today who complete 25 years of service to the School.

When I became Headmaster of St. Andrew's 15 years ago, one of my first appointments was to ask Eric Kemer to become Associate Academic Dean for math and science. I appointed Eric to that position, for I knew Eric brought a deep understanding of both disciplines and a creative and significant commitment to the study of great teaching. Since his appointment, Eric has continued to teach powerful courses in both departments; he has led searches that found outstanding teachers to join these two departments.

Eric is a student of teaching, and for the past decade, he has worked hard to visit and evaluate classes taught by our math and science faculty. Today, with this faculty and students, Eric has built an innovative and creative program in math and science.

In his career, Eric has coached soccer, basketball and cross-country, and he has served our students as a trusted advisor and mentor. He is a writer, scholar, scientist, reader and athlete. I am proud to award Eric this 25th Anniversary Headmaster's Medal.

25-Year Anniversary Medal – Dave DeSalvo

It turned out that 1987 was a good year for St. Andrew's, for we hired a promising young math teacher that year in addition to Eric Kemer. His name was and is David DeSalvo, and for the past 25 years, he has immersed himself into every aspect of this community of faith and learning. As a math teacher, Dave is a teacher our students love and respect—he is clear, articulate, generous and intelligent, and he is with his students every step of the way in each one of his classes. As a Chaplain, Dave works to make the Chapel a place of humanity, exploration and warmth. He brings his love of music and love of people to every service he leads. During his career, Dave has coached baseball, advised the yearbook, advised classes and served as an inspirational colleague, advisor and mentor. He reminds us of the joy and

privilege and responsibility of being an Episcopal School, and he lives out a life of faith, humanity and integrity.

For Dave DeSalvo, life at boarding school is all about the appreciation and cultivation of small but powerful moments of human connection: moments that arise on Fridays at Sunrise Bogel, moments that emerge in a Friday Chapel, conversations that develop on dorm or in a classroom or field. If there is good work to be done in support of the mission, if there is a need for a scorekeeper, timer, announcer, community service leader, trustee for the homeless shelter in town, leader of a service trip, Dave DeSalvo will be there—alert, quiet, enthusiastic and generous.

It is an honor for me to award Dave DeSalvo with a 25th Anniversary Headmaster's Medal.

INTRODUCTION OF EMILY GROHS
AND IKE AMAKIRI

Emily Grohs and Ike Amakiri led this tremendous Class of 2012 this year. They had plenty of help from leaders in every section and individual in their class, and they graciously and generously shared their leadership to make everyone in the class vested in the Form's success. Both Emily and Ike have a deep understanding of St. Andrew's, and I know you will enjoy hearing their reflections this morning. Ike will speak first.

COMMENCEMENT (Sunday)

Robert T. Jordan Award: Given by his classmates and former teachers at St. Andrew's in memory of Robert T. Jordan, Class of 1986, who died September 11, 2001 in the World Trade Center attack, to the IV Former who displays the qualities that made Robert so memorable and distinctive: a love of humanity, an appreciation of friendship, a willful perseverance and resolve amidst adversity and opportunity, a unique and refreshing perspective on life and all its possibilities. Presented by his classmate, Ann Taylor, to:

Lucy Catherine Slack
Thomas Weld von Oehsen

Christopher Wilson Award and Scholarship: Given by his parents in memory of Christopher Edward Wilson, class of 1999. The award recognizes that senior who best embodies Chris' virtues and personal qualities: a love of St. Andrew's, a quiet and authentic appreciation of life, friendship and community, a devotion to service and to children, and a kind and generous spirit. Presented by his father Ted Wilson to:

Jacob Tyler Myers

Headmaster's Award: Given to the VI Former who, in the opinion of the Headmaster, has made distinguished contributions to the culture of the school. Presented by me to:

Mary Carolyn Dalrymple
Michael Edward Ding
Alissa Jacqueline Jacques
Chaitanya Hari Singhanian

Fine Arts Award: Awarded to the student who has made the greatest contribution in the fine arts and demonstrated a depth and quality of talent that demands our recognition. Presented by Arts Department Chair Ann Taylor to:

Julio Alberto Ramirez
Margaret Debay Rogers

Henry Prize: Awarded to the VI Form boy and girl who have been of the greatest service to athletics. It recognizes not only personal athletic skill, but also service to the teams of which the students were members. Presented by Athletic Directors Lindsay Wright and Michael Hyde to:

Margaret Elizabeth Belk
Nina Marie Labovich
John Tiller MacIntosh
Jacob Tyler Myers
Grace Rose Saliba

The Cristin C. Duprey Diversity and Inclusivity Award: Awarded in memory of Cristin C. Duprey, Class of 2004, to the VI Former who has provided exceptional service in the cultivation of a diverse and inclusive St. Andrew's School community. Presented by Co-Directors of Diversity and Inclusivity David Miller and Treava Milton to:

Emily Madeleine Grohs
Chaitanya Hari Singhanian

King Prize: For the leading scholar during the VI Form year. Presented by Academic Dean Nathan Costa to:

Annabel Mackenzie Imbrie-Moore

Founder's Medal: Awarded to the scholar in the graduating class who, during his or her career at St. Andrew's, has achieved the best academic record in the Form. Presented by Secretary/Treasurer of the Board of Trustees Caroline Prickett to:

Annabel Mackenzie Imbrie-Moore

William H. Cameron Award: Given to the VI Former who has performed outstanding service to the School. Presented by her advisor, David Miller to:

Emily Madeleine Grohs

St. Andrew's Cross: Given in honor of the late Bishop Cook of Delaware, who was associated with the founding of the School. It recognizes the student whose contribution to the School has been distinguished for Christian qualities of concern for others, humility and high principle. Presented by his advisor Al Wood to:

Jacob Tyler Myers

INTRODUCTION OF BETSY CAHILL

Over the last several years of my career, I have been on the look out for mentors/adults who seem to embody the very best characteristics of what it means to be a mature, responsible adult in the 21st century. I searched for men and women who delight in the life of the mind, write eloquently and persuasively about matters of the heart and soul, balance many competing responsibilities (family, professional life and civic life), demonstrate a reverence for education, and commit to a lifetime of hope, optimism and learning.

Betsy Cahill serves as one of my mentors—as a writer, scholar, trustee, parent and counselor, she invariably teaches me about the art of education, about the relationship of faith and learning, and about the power of the written word. She knows St. Andrew's well, and she has an intellectual, spiritual and natural ability to read, appreciate and strengthen our core values.

Betsy Cahill is a graduate of Ashley Hall School in Charleston, South Carolina. She earned her bachelor's degree, *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa at Radcliffe College at Harvard University. From 1983-1986, she studied as a Rhodes Scholar at Christ Church at the University of Oxford with specialized study of Greek tragedy, Shakespeare and Yeats. In 2006, she earned her Master's in Religion at Yale Divinity School where she graduated *summa cum laude*.

Betsy Cahill is a distinguished writer, essayist and reviewer for *Commonweal Magazine*. She is the co-author of Shakespeare Alive! written with Joseph Papp of the New York Shakespeare Festival.

She has served on the Boards of Ashley Hall, the Greenwich, CT, Library and the Association of American Rhodes Scholars. She currently serves both the St. Andrew's Board and the Board of Porter-Gaud School in Charleston, SC.

She is married to John Cahill with whom she has four wonderful children Ella, Class of 2011, Thomas, Class of 2012, Jack and Charlie.

We are honored and excited to welcome Betsy as our speaker this morning. I thank her for her friendship, her wisdom and her willingness to add a Commencement speech to her busy writing calendar.

