

Commencement Speech, May 27, 2007
Penn Daniel '07
Co-President

When I first learned that I would be speaking before the governor of Massachusetts, I'll be honest, I wasn't exactly thrilled, but today I'll give it a shot. Secondly, just to give him a warm welcome from my class, I have to do this. When I say "Gov," you say, "Nah." "Gov!" - "Nah!" "Gov!" - "Nah!"

It is difficult to sum up our years at St. Andrew's in a few minutes, but what I will say is simply an extension of a conversation that's been going on throughout our time here. Many classes before us have commented on how the final few weeks of senior year are the times in which we reflect on our memories at St. Andrew's and truly begin to understand the meaning of what has happened here. I think we've all found that statement to be true.

To start, I wanted to reflect on a memory at, of all places, Waffle House. For this Thursday night ritual, a few of us have gone at 10:05 to sit down, have Vanilla Coke, with a bacon-egg and cheese, and share the experiences of the week. Now most definitely, filling your stomach with some solid grease and sugar is quite satisfying, but what has made our trips to Waffle House so memorable is the times we've spent with our beloved waitress, Carolyn. Carolyn has three jobs and works the night shift at Waffle House every Thursday from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. Whenever we show up, she gets this big grin on her face and already knows our order. Every night at Waffle House, we've brightened the life of someone working that much harder than we do, someone who makes six-page papers and AP exams look like a breeze.

One of the most comforting thoughts I have leaving this place is that we've each done something like this - not for ourselves, not to impress anyone, not to help us get into college - but simply because we care. That is the character of our class. We left campus every Thursday and came back to campus different because we had each formed a bond with someone else. On our final trip to see Carolyn, she generously covered our tab and gave each of us Waffle House visors. She trusted us enough to make this kind gesture, and the connection we've formed with her over these few months is priceless. For the little that we did stopping by for some late-night company, she answered by doing even more for us than we had ever initially conceived.

Another moment that comes to mind is a Saturday night sophomore or junior year, I can't remember which one. Due to some serious frustration regarding females, my friends and I decided to go ease the pain by smashing fruit off the shore of Noxontown Pond with golf clubs. Now why, might you ask, is this at all relevant to what today is about? Well, I was recently talking to some St. Andrew's alums who had graduated in 2005, and we got on to discussing what they missed most about St. Andrew's. They quickly told me it was the seemingly trivial and thoughtless activities made life here such a blast. We've used our creative minds to find strange sources of enjoyment in Middletown. These experiences cannot be lived anywhere but this school. It is moments like this that characterize the bond that exists between every alumnus of this school for an inexplicable reason. There is no rationale behind what goes on here, there is no formula for having a good time, but rather a common understanding between the people who graduate from here. It is what makes St. Andrew's St. Andrew's. We each have our own small anecdote, our own particular experience that stands out.

We've got a number of people to thank - parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives. But in addition to thanking this group, I think we need to earnestly tip our hats to the faculty. The people sitting behind me have changed our lives in ways we never could have predicted. They have lifted us from the lowest of the low, they've made us excel in subjects we never thought possible, they've given us faithful support on the athletic field, and most important of all, they have taught us to think. Without substantial reason to do so, they have relentlessly put their faith in us, devoting their time and intellect to our personal betterment. We all have our personal confidants. We've come to them in desperation - some in tears, some in anger - seeking some sort of impossible resolution to our problems. Yet time and time again, they always seem to know we'll be just fine. To the faculty, we are forever indebted.

These have been the best times of our lives, there is no doubt about it. But what's even more consoling is the thought that's been sticking in the back of my mind throughout these last few weeks. It's the thought that even though on this day we part, even though on this day time will inevitably separate us, we will continue to possess and improve the invaluable characteristics we've adopted from our fellow classmates, from the faculty, and from this wonderful place. Even though we'll be separated, the bonds that have been formed will never be broken, and the great

times will never be lost. Don't ever forget what happened here, wherever you end up. Don't forget the thrill of beating Friends and Tower Hill and Tatnall. Don't forget the stress of an exhibition paper, the petty quarrels among one another, the Carol Shout, the art openings, riding with the Murray's, the free days, the trips to Wawa, the late nights in Founders, going to Friendly's with Golds, the power half hour, chatting with Norm at brunch, the Random Bible Verse of the Day, the endless all-nighters full of Coke and Red Bull. Take these memories and keep them close. We'll probably never do anything like them again.

To close, these kids have striven each and every day to not only better themselves, but to better everyone around them. Meeting one, being the parent of one, or simply being a friend to one is nothing less than an honor. It is an honor I have been privileged enough to have for the past three years. It's time to go now, it's time to leave the Dining Hall, the Front Lawn, the Garth. But although it may be time to leave St. Andrew's, it will never be time to leave the memories. I've never know a finer group of people than the ones sitting right in front of me. I love you all, and good luck. It's been a pleasure.