

Commencement Speech, May 24, 2009  
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Co-President

Today the class of 2009 leaves St. Andrew's and congratulations to us, we made it. Perhaps it might be fitting to commemorate this moment in celebration with a custom familiar to us all. "Happy graduation to the class of 2009. Love, Mr. Roach, Mr. Caldwell, Ms. Ramirez, Mr. Everhart, Mrs. Cottone, Crumps, Greg, Clifton and Bonney, Playing with Fire, John Childay, brandings, rule changing, wagon wheels, the kool-aid mafia, the sing-alongs, the pirate ship, the creation of proctored freshman study hall, and every SAS class from '06 to '12."

However, today we leave it all behind. The class of 2009 will leave the student body not for long weekend, not for spring break, not even for summer, but for good. So what's the point of all this nostalgia? I promise I'm not simply trying to make anyone exceedingly sad. No, in addition to reminding the graduating class of the times they had here, I mention the finality of this moment to set the tone for a simple challenge to the underformers. Enjoy yourself here over the coming years. The task I present you with today is difficult. In an extremely subtle way, it will be hard for all of you.

Most of us spend our time here attempting to simply make it to Saturday. It is not at all that we are particularly unhappy, it is simply that we are so busy and more often than not stressed. We go from one academic crisis to the next, trying to scramble to the surface to the end of the day, to the weekend, to the break. Falling into this rhythm we can forget about how incredible St. Andrew's is and forget to take the time to enjoy ourselves. So in order to avoid this complacency, every once in a while, remember how blessed you are to be here. We live in a beautiful and vibrant community, however, it's easy to take Founders, the pond, the fields, the forest and most of all, the people, for granted. I myself was reminded of this two nights ago while watching the outtakes of the new admissions video. As we all gathered around the Zendts TV, the running joke seemed to be, "Where is that place?", yet obviously we all knew it was St. Andrew's. And though I'm quite sure that the crew filmed every single misty sunrise that has happened in the last nine months, I think we were all struck not only by the beauty of the campus but also by the vitality of the movie subjects. The place in the video seemed a fantasy far too

good to be true yet in reality we were all looking into a mirror and what we saw was stunning. Whether you realize it or not, we live in an amazing community that has given us all valuable and unique opportunities and experiences, so rather than worry about that paper you have to write next period or fantasize about a weekend that, let's face it, doesn't really exist anyway. Appreciate the fact that nearly every student in the school just slid down the front lawn in the driving rain or smile because our headmaster just screamed the words to *We Three Kings* at the top of his lungs. Take pride in the fact that last night the student body raised thousands for a little boy in need or that a couple of guys can always be counted on to paint S-A-I-N-T-S across their chest and E-T-H-O-S across their back for the big game. Perhaps simply step back and take the time to appreciate that smile you get as you struggle the first period. Underformers, please don't let these years simply race by, instead relish this wonderful chapter of your life. For in a year, or two, or three, you will stand at the same crossroads we have now reached. Your time at St. Andrew's evaporated before your very eyes. Here at this point, your time to jump in the pond, lounge on the front lawn or get to know yet one more zany and wonderful St. Andrean you didn't know beforehand will be gone forever.

For the class of 2009, these privileges are slipping away and tragically there isn't anything we can do about it. And from up here I can tell you, it is a terrible and heartrending feeling and yet, I also know this is not the end. If anything, it's a beginning. Next year we will move onto new and exciting things and we will certainly return and reunite as the alums present here today have done. Yet now in this conflicted moment all we can do is reflect on what St. Andrew's has meant to us and be thankful that we have been lucky enough to have been a part of it all and to those of you who must now take up the mantle, those of the class of 2009 leaves behind, appreciate every moment here, for trust me, each and every one is precious beyond belief.

Thank you.