



**Reflections from
Our Headmaster**

2006-2009

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ST. ANDREW'S SCHOOL
Middletown, Delaware

Celebrating Daniel T. Roach, Jr.

Book II

Headmaster Tad Roach is a master of a special art form—the art of giving a “talk.” Whether he is speaking to students in chapel or at school meeting, sharing thoughts with parents during Arts or Parents’ Weekend, or addressing the extended St. Andrew’s community in our online newsletters, Tad has a gift for articulating the essence of St. Andrew’s. His talks communicate a vision of education at its best, of all that a great school can do, and of all that young people can become. Students, faculty, staff members, parents and alumni come away from these talks with a sense of Tad’s steadfast faith in the work of this School. His conviction is clear: St. Andrew’s affirms that his great vision is possible.

In honor of Tad’s 10th Anniversary as headmaster of St. Andrew’s School in 2006, we felt it most appropriate to acknowledge his legacy with a compilation of some of his most inspiring talks. The compilation, *Ten Years: Ten Talks From Tad*, has been reprinted twice. Now, three years later, we are pleased to present *Reflections from Our Headmaster, 2006-2009*, a new collection of moving and insightful talks. We are thrilled to be able to share these words with you, and we hope that you enjoy them.

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On the Vision of St. Andrew's

Founders Day, November 2008

I wish you all a joyous and peaceful St. Andrew's Day and invite you to join Trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, friends and me in giving thanks and taking responsibility and stewardship for the vision, courage and generosity that made the creation of this School possible.

Founders Day marks the anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone outside my office in Founders Hall. It was a day when the extensive planning for the opening of St. Andrew's led 75 people to brave a cold November day to witness the School's Founder Alexis Felix duPont place the first trowel of mortar of the cornerstone of this majestic building. The actual opening of the School and the completion of Founders Hall were still ten months away, but the ceremony marked the end of the planning phase of the School's history. The ceremony included the insertion of a box embedded in the cornerstone. The box contains a Bible, a copy of the new prayer book, a copy of the *Journal of the Diocese of Delaware* for 1929, drawings of the architect Arthur H. Brockie, copies of newspapers reporting on the various planning stages of the School, a one-dollar bill and coins, founding documents of the School, names of Trustees and a statement of purpose and mission from Mr. duPont. The letter read: "The teaching and conduct of this School is based on the Christian religion. The Trustees and teachers believe that man's knowledge of right and wrong has been revealed by Almighty God, demonstrated by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and that man is guided by the Holy Spirit to live according to God's revelation." Today, 79 years later, we are the beneficiaries of Mr. duPont's legacy.

As we celebrate St. Andrew's Day and Founders Day tonight, I want to share a few thoughts about my vision for the School and our connection to the past. Part of the complexity and opportunity inherent in my work as the School's fourth Headmaster is applying the School's spirit and founding principles both to the realities and challenges of modern life and to the most important, innovative and inspiring theories of education. Each year, as the School develops and changes, I try to communicate my vision of St. Andrew's to a diverse audience of alumni, students, faculty, staff, parents and prospective students. On a given day, I may receive an email from a member of the Class of 2005 and a letter from a member of the Class of 1941. Their views on experiences and expectations of the School may at first seem quite different, but there are eternal verities the School celebrates for all eras.

My particular passion for and belief in St. Andrew's derive in large part from my belief that the essential principles of our Founders apply beautifully, naturally and effectively to 21st century culture and education. Our Founders created a school in 1929 that by mission, architecture and character emphasized community, friendship, mentorship, respect among students, staff members and teachers. From our earliest days as a school, St. Andrew's believed that the most transformative form of education was one characterized by smallness, intimacy, connection among members of the community. St. Andrew's was always intended to be a residential community, a family residing in a large yet welcoming building. Our Founders placed the School at some distance from the distractions of the world, believing that great education could be best achieved through contemplation, concentration and reflection and through the exploration of a campus flourishing with natural beauty. I think often of the first walk Walden Pell took on June 4, 1929, when Felix duPont and Allen Henry escorted him from the banks of Noxontown Pond up to the proposed site of the School. Pell described the scene and setting as lush and beautiful.

St. Andrew's was the first American boarding school to be founded with a mission that embraced the central concept of financial aid. Mr. duPont decided that his school would be open to all regardless of means. In so doing, he made specific and symbolic commitments to the American belief in the promise of equal opportunity for all.

Our Founders envisioned St. Andrew's as a place that connected faith and learning, a commitment that enabled St. Andrew's to explore its spiritual mission in an open, discerning and progressive way. As we have sought to be a school directed by the teachings and life of Jesus, we have remained open to the unfolding of God's vision for us of the ideal Christian community, one characterized by a spirit of acceptance, empathy, charity and goodwill.

Today, we live in a frenetic and challenging new century, overcome at times with a glut of information, distractions, anxiety, isolation and fear. How appropriate and brilliant is it then to suggest, to pose a different mode of living and belonging, to suggest that we can best create meaning and hope and inspiration in our lives not by virtual distraction or individualistic success or isolation but through membership in a community of humanity. St. Andrew's present day ethos does harken back to our earliest beliefs about the power of a small community united for good, collaborating for a purpose larger than ourselves.

Even living in the age of distraction, the era of technology and mass communication, St. Andrew's campus, buildings and philosophy bring us together in conversation, in study, in worship and in play. We can, if we are intentional, live in nature, surrounded and renewed by 2,100 acres of pristine beauty and opportunity. We can learn to live sustainably, to honor the earth, to rescue our planet, to express a consistent spirit of humility and stewardship before the majesty of nature. We can learn to live more simple, fundamental, essential lives if we embrace the peace and serenity our Founders bequeathed and envisioned. We can fill the common rooms, dining room and front lawn with students, faculty, staff members united by a common educational and moral purpose.

Our commitment to financial aid as a cornerstone of St. Andrew's remains strong and steadfast in the 21st century school. The rest of the world of colleges, universities and secondary schools has now recognized what our Founders saw in 1929—that great schools and colleges come alive through the dynamic interaction of young men and women from diverse backgrounds; that the very future of our democracy depends on education's ability to make equal opportunity a reality for all Americans. On a night like tonight, we can thank our Founders for their belief that St. Andrew's from the beginning was the antithesis of the private school designed mainly for private good. St. Andrew's was never designed to set students apart, to label them privileged or elite. We remember that St. Andrew's was founded to bring us together, as a School, as a community, as a nation.

Our Founders challenged us to create an extraordinary academy of learning on campus. They encouraged us to develop a program characterized by the highest standards and thereby unleashed a tradition of engagement, innovation and creativity among the students and faculty of the School. Our commitment to academic engagement, authentic learning, seminar classes, academic technology, exhibitions, tutorials, lab work, thought-provoking assessments and most importantly the faculty/student mentoring model derive from our Founders' permission to dream of, create and enact a school that takes the process of learning seriously. The way we teach, study, engage and work each day honors our Founders' aspirations for the School.

But at St. Andrew's, the life of the scholar, athlete and artist is secondary to questions of character, ethics and responsibility. We as St. Andreans are called to explore and consider what it might mean to think, act and live in Jesus' spirit. What acts of kindness, generosity and empathy might be possible here and in the world if we lived through his spirit and example, if we looked quietly and humbly for his emerging vision unfolding in the world? Former St. Andrew's Chaplain Simon Mein captured the transformative power of the church/school community when he wrote that Jesus' divinity rested on his continued declaration of the breadth of God's love standing over

against human construction of narrow exclusivity. What Mr. Mein meant, of course, was that the Christian school enacts God's expansive never ending love of humankind and nature, that St. Andrew's stands proudly opposed to efforts to exclude, demonize and threaten others. This was, of course, the core of Mr. duPont's ethical experiment: Could a group of students gather each year and find meaning, courage, hope and love by living in diversity and in community and studying and emulating the life of Jesus Christ? Would such a community become at its core countercultural, progressive and transformational? Would such young men and women leave this place and create hope and meaning and love and reconciliation wherever they would go? Would St. Andrew's become a school of hope amidst a century of war, conflict and tragedy?

Tonight, we give thanks to all who dreamed of, envisioned, built, developed and inspired this School. This is our time on this sacred ground, our time to live in a community of humanity and nature, our time to participate in the ethical experiment of St. Andrew's. We need to do our best to fulfill the highest ideals and expectations of our Founders by living well, studying well, playing well, creating well and loving well. When it is time for us all to leave, let us go determined to live with new energy, vigor, purpose and intention and to support this noble enterprise and vision, to ensure that others have this opportunity, this experience of a lifetime.

On Education and Engagement

August 2007

Having just completed my 10th year as St. Andrew's Headmaster, I thought it would be interesting to reflect on the ways my educational philosophy has changed during this decade. These years have corresponded with drastic transformations in our international community that can't help but alter the face of American culture and education. We have experienced the terror of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As a democracy, we have sought to balance our desire for and need of security with our passion for the principles of human rights, due process of law and the rights of individual privacy. As a nation, we have witnessed the costs of American preemptive military action in a complex and turbulent region.

Over the past few decades, the world has awakened to the fact that we face a global environmental crisis that threatens the natural world and the welfare of future generations in profound and disturbing ways. Americans, in particular, must now decide whether they are willing to make the necessary sacrifices and compromises in our modern lives that will enable us to sustain our environment for the long haul. Hurricane Katrina gave Americans and the world a frightening portrait of the consequences of global warming and of our nation's neglect of those who live invisibly in the poorest sections of our cities, towns and villages. Indeed, the first casualties of our entitled western lifestyle will be those in the world who live in poverty and who, ironically, have contributed least to the environmental degradation that has spread in this century.

Calls for dramatic improvements and reforms in American education have intensified as Americans have realized the extent of economic competition in today's world. American approaches to

education are increasingly governed by an emphasis on high stakes testing, assessments that to a large degree dominate the teaching practices of our local schools. Advocates of such testing give little thought to the question of whether such assessments are worthwhile, whether they measure the most important skills students will need in this century by demanding reflection, deliberation and discernment.

We have witnessed a dramatic increase in competition for admission to American colleges and universities, and this competition has given impetus to a multimillion-dollar industry of test prep and private counseling designed to give students the competitive edge for success. At the same time, we have seen colleges, universities and schools report dramatic increases in students' need for counseling, psychological services and medication for issues ranging from alcohol and drug abuse to eating disorders, depression and difficulties with learning. We see students driven for success who acknowledge a deep spiritual emptiness that pervades their lives and erodes their sense of optimism and idealism.

This decade has witnessed the tragedies of school and college shootings at Columbine, in Lancaster and, last spring, at Virginia Tech. Institutions of learning are now faced with the challenge of balancing their commitment to connecting with local communities and maintaining a campus that is safe and secure. In a world of uncertainty and terrorism, schools and colleges have had to develop crisis plans for evacuation, lock downs and security surveillance.

As the disparity between the rich and the poor in America widens with every passing year, tuitions at private schools and colleges continue to rise and threaten access to many qualified and passionate individuals who simply cannot afford to meet these financial demands. Investment in private schools' physical plants continues to accelerate, and campuses now look more and more like country clubs rather than places of community and learning. Colleges participate in a ranking system designed to promote external markers of wealth, admissions selectivity and reputation rather than educational excellence, civic engagement and the celebration of great teaching.

Innovations in technology dominate the lives of students in elementary, middle, high school and college. Student immersion in the virtual world now dramatically diminishes time spent in actual community, in nature, with family and with reading. Cell phones, text messaging, MySpace, Facebook, instant messaging, video games and DVDs dominate the day-to-day life of American kids. No studies credit technology with enhancing the quality of learning achieved in our schools and colleges. On the contrary, many studies suggest that technology may be leading students into a world that makes it easier to dissociate from real life and harder to develop crucial skills of empathy, sensitivity and concern for others. Neil Postman's phrase rings true: "We are amusing ourselves to death."

Perhaps, I once believed that the work of schools should somehow remain impervious to the movements of the culture. Now, I believe that schools must be responding—powerfully and immediately—to the world we have created and inherited. Therefore, our approach to education and life at St. Andrew's has been to set the School on a course that is countercultural insofar as it expresses and defends a commitment to the principles of a liberal arts education. In this month's issue of *Orion*, Lowell Monke and Fran Forman argue that one of "schooling's most important tasks is to compensate for, rather than intensify society's excesses."

If our technological culture conspires to eliminate the very basic human interactions on which our sense of community depends (and it does), Monke and Forman argue that schools "should stress the kind of deeply caring, fully present and wholly human interaction that long ago disappeared from public life." If technology makes it more likely that students will live virtually rather than in connection with nature (and it does), then schools should deliberately work to introduce students to the natural world. Monke and Forman write: "We must help children get beyond the environment we have built to fit humans and experience the larger environment within which humans must learn to fit."

If the post 9-11 world has been dominated by questions of war, religious fundamentalism and fear, the great school must teach peace, develop challenging courses on history and world religions and affirm the power of faith, creativity and courage. If the world faces a dramatic environmental crisis, the great school teaches its community how to make the changes in practice, habit and assumption necessary to save the earth. If American society is split between those who are rich and those who are poor, the great school dedicates itself to working to promote social justice and recognition of the rights of those who are invisible in our society. And the great school fights passionately for financial aid programs that extend the opportunity of a great education to those in our society who are poor. If American education has reduced teaching and learning to the execution of mindless multiple-choice testing, the great school must work to support a form of education that asks students to demonstrate authentic understanding through the development of portfolios and exhibitions.

At St. Andrew's, I now begin the year by warning myself not to allow the School to become a place of triviality and entitlement. So much of what is wrong in American education today comes from a narrowing of both the vision and ambition of the great school. The great school honors the full human potential of its students and consistently challenges them to engage in the real work of a democracy: the work of peace, justice, reconciliation, hospitality and environmental sustainability. We cannot expect our students magically to engage as citizens in the compelling issues of our times if we refuse to share these questions with them and allow them to retreat from their moral responsibilities to address them. We cannot develop citizens, leaders of the world, if we treat their education as a narrow commodity. We cannot teach students to think if our assessments require nothing more than docile mastery and recitation of stagnant concepts. We cannot inspire St. Andrew's mission if we as adults are living narrow, frightened and inconsequential lives.

Therefore, we have learned to teach, live and create community through the exploration of the central questions posed by life in

the 21st century. Our academic program seeks to ignite passion and creativity, and our assessments demand authentic thinking and authentic demonstrations of understanding. We intentionally create opportunities for our students to hear dynamic and challenging speakers in Chapel, School meetings and special programs. We encourage political and environmental activism. We seek to expand our community service outreach programs both during the school year and in the summer. We work with Bishop Wright to express a culture of engagement and relief to those in our world who are in distress or in despair. Rather than settle for being a private school walled off in isolation from the world, we strive to be a community that reaches out and makes a difference in the world.

Many years ago, Sally Pingree, St. Andrew's trustee, taught me to engage the students of St. Andrew's in meaningful work, meaningful conversation and meaningful advisory roles. From her experience working with schools and colleges, Sally Pingree knew that, oftentimes, college presidents and headmasters rarely gained the benefits of student perspective and student ownership. To a degree, St. Andrew's students have always participated actively in the work of the School. They serve important roles on the Student Life Committee, Honor and Discipline Committees and our VI Form students take on crucial roles mentoring our younger students and working together with the faculty. But over the years, I have realized the necessity of doing even more. We now look to students for commitment to our environmental initiatives, diversity work, community service programs, campus planning and evaluations of the School's program. The more we embrace this habit of engaging students in the consideration of our most important challenges, the better our understanding of essential issues becomes and the more deeply our students embrace the countercultural life of this School. If we believe that the students have nothing to teach us, nothing to offer us, nothing to awaken in us, we will get what we deserve: a stagnant, self-entitled student body with no sense of community or connectedness.

I once had a coach who screamed the same refrain at me at every practice during my freshman and sophomore years of high school. “Don’t think,” he would yell, “Don’t think!” What he wanted was a player who could be a machine, following set plays, set formulas and set responses. And the fear he engendered, and the power he possessed in my eyes, enabled him to turn me, mold me, change me into the player he wanted so badly to create.

I think about this coach’s effect on me every year on the opening day of faculty meetings, and I have seen him reappear in the lives of my own children as they have gone through their own school experiences. It is easy to make kids feel invisible, stupid, inconsequential, worthless and incompetent. Anyone can do that. But what I remember most about my experience with my coach was the mentor and advisor who called me into his office after a particularly savage practice. He simply asked if I was doing all right—he did not criticize his colleague—he just made it clear that he knew, he understood how difficult my situation was and that he was there for me. Thanks to that simple moment of reassurance, I was able to handle the treatment of the coach without losing my confidence, identity or courage.

Ultimately, St. Andrew’s cannot respond to the challenges of 21st century education and culture without the development and retention of a faculty that models such high levels of scholarship, engagement, compassion and generosity. In American high schools, the new pressure of specialization has to a certain extent eroded the power and influence of the triple threat teacher: the man or woman who teaches brilliantly, coaches or directs in the afternoon and serves as a trusted mentor for students. Now, outside coaches do the coaching, counselors do the advising and the teachers accept a far more limited and distant role in school culture.

At St. Andrew’s, we must continue to celebrate and develop our commitment to an excellent faculty, men and women who share their lives, their idealism and their optimism, and who make a home with and for their students. Our approach to education, which involves

teaching and parenting round the clock, is not for everyone. But when such a teacher arrives, lives and works on campus, St. Andrew's advances a step closer to the affirmation of our mission. Kids appear magically by such teachers' sides—in the classroom, office, dining room, arts center, dorm home or apartment. And suddenly, the line that had separated the life of the adult community and the life of the student community blurs and disappears. The allure of the kiddie culture fades, and the teachers and students collaborate, embrace and face together the life of the community and the work of life.

I dropped my daughter off at college last week, and after moving a few bags into her dorm room, I watched her walk towards the door of the field house where she would formally begin her college experience. As I watched her, I realized that the faculty here had given her the strength, confidence, independence and spirit to do anything in the world she wanted or needed to do, not only in the awkward days of college transition, but in her life. “Think,” they taught her and her classmates; “engage,” they taught her and her classmates; “march, stand up, debate, argue and transform,” they taught her and her classmates; “be thoughtful, generous and empathetic,” they taught her and her classmates. I thank the faculty for the gifts they bestow on these students with every passing year.

A number of years ago, St. Andrew's adopted the prayer attributed to St. Francis as the School prayer, for it somehow captures our identity as a School whose mission is to respond to our culture and to transform the lives of those with whom we live. Let me end with this vision of Episcopal community and education. This is what we do each day. This is why we open our doors each year...

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

On Athletics

Winter 2007

For much of the first half of my life, I spent a great deal of time playing and coaching sports. What I learned and experienced as an athlete in high school and in college and as a coach at St. Andrew's is impossible for me to assess completely. I have photographs throughout my office of my high school soccer team, my college soccer and tennis teams, my St. Andrew's teams, and they all have a powerful resonance for me. What I can say for certain is that I am convinced that athletics taught me inspirational lessons about life, about competition, about mental preparation, courage, discipline, patience and sportsmanship. And, I know that I still yearn to play and to coach even today. This summer with no training or thinking, I impulsively entered two tennis tournaments in Buffalo simply because I thought I should experience the feeling of competing on courts and in a sport I had come to love so much. And, perhaps, someday before I retire, I will coach a season of soccer, basketball or tennis again. It would be an amazing experience to have that honor and privilege once more.

Tonight, I would like to reflect a bit on the magic and opportunity you have as student athletes and we as teachers have as coaches, partly because you all inspire me by your play, your sportsmanship, your maturity, grace and dignity and partly because so much of the national news emphasizes the distortion and disgrace of amateur athletics in our culture today.

The educational foundation behind the development of athletic programs has almost been overwhelmed by the power of our culture's dedication towards winning at all costs and the celebration of the athlete as a person of power, authority and supremacy on the high

school, college and professional level. What educators believe is that athletics prepare students for life—that participation in and engagement in interscholastic competition teach skills and habits of body, mind and heart that will inspire, transform and prepare them for lives in the adult world. We believe that involvement in and commitment to interscholastic athletics provide important opportunities for students to learn the following skills:

- To learn how to develop habits of physical fitness and mental preparation for competition.
- To learn how to work with discipline and resilience and courage towards collective goals and individual goals.
- To learn how to work collaboratively, competitively with teammates.
- To learn how to compete ethically, honestly, cleanly.
- To learn how to appreciate and honor the humanity, talents and spirit of the opposition.
- To learn how to handle adversity and defeat with sportsmanship and grace, to learn how to win with class and humility.
- To learn how to respect opposing schools, coaches, fans.
- To respect and honor the service of referees who work to provide the opportunity for interscholastic competition.
- To develop skills and habits of leadership and responsibility for team and team members.
- To effectively develop and balance time management skills through involvement in academics, residential life, the arts, external activities, student life and athletics.
- To learn the power of miracles derived from collective efforts towards a common goal.

Because we live in a culture that explicitly demands athletic success by any means necessary, schools and colleges are particularly vulnerable to the kinds of scandals and crises that we all know too well from reading the newspapers this year. We read of videotaped hazing rituals, altered or non-existent transcripts, cases of athletes involved in sexual assault, vandalism and alcohol/drug abuse, cases of steroid abuse and cases of schools and colleges where the culture of athletics sends a message of exclusion, hostility and contempt to the values of the school or university. Just last week, in one of the worst cases recorded recently, a football game between the University of Miami and Florida International University exploded in a brawl that lasted for 15 minutes and stopped only when police took to the field and separated the two teams.

There really is another way to experience the opportunity of athletic competition, one quite different from a mad culture that urges you to only pursue sports if you are gifted and therefore marketable, only to play one sport so you can maximize your marketability, and to see athletics not as an opportunity for teamwork, collaboration and support, but as an individualistic race to recognition and achievement. We embody this model—a form of amateur athletics that is old-fashioned but ultimately moral and ethical—very well at St. Andrew's, but it is good now and then to remind ourselves of our values, our ethics and, yes, our athletic ethos within the School. And it is important to think of ways of deepening our ethos and demonstrating our values more consistently and clearly.

The ethos is this—

We have to begin first with a recognition of the humanity and dignity of those with whom we compete. It is easier and convenient at times to demonize, hate and ridicule the opposition to gain a psychological edge or impulse to play with more tenacity or determination. If we hate our opponent, if we say that we want to hurt, overwhelm, slaughter, kill and decimate them, we, the assumption goes, will play with more ferocity and determination.

In a 1985 article, Brenda Jo Bredemeier and David Shields explore the effect of athletics on players' moral reasoning. For a variety of reasons, they discovered that athletes often suspended their moral decision-making processes when they were placed in the context of sports. They write: "The moral norms which prescribe equal consideration of all people are often suspended during competition in favor of a more egocentric moral perspective. One male college basketball player explains the difference this way: 'In sports you can do what you want. In life, it's more restricted. It's harder to make decisions in life because there are so many people to think about, different people to worry about. In sports you are here to think about yourself.'" Bredemeier and Shields also point out that athletes can evade moral reasoning and responsibility by putting themselves under the care and supervision of coaches or officials. Their reasoning may be that it is the officials' responsibility to detect fouls and transgressions against the humanity of opponents. The authors ultimately conclude that mature athletes do embrace and display a deep understanding of their moral and ethical responsibilities for the welfare of those with whom they compete. I agree.

We begin then with an implicit and explicit appreciation for those with whom we play and compete, and when we play we play honestly, cleanly, ethically and humbly, the more so if we play against those who fail to meet that ethical standard.

St. Andrew's teams play with great spirit, determination, effort, pride, courage and teamwork. Yes, we remember and celebrate moments when a small school rises up to win state titles against all odds, when crews compete for national and international victories at Stotesbury and Henley, but we play with this spirit every day, at every level. When we win, we are gracious, humble and appreciative of the feelings of those who have lost. When we lose, we congratulate the victors and walk away with our dignity intact. We strive to work and play with more spirit, courage, intensity and intention than any school in the state—we are not awed or overwhelmed by teams that are bigger, faster and more highly ranked.

Each year seniors pause before they play their final game at the end of the fall, winter and spring seasons, for they know now what I have known for over 30 years: our time as members of teams, our times as competitors are precious, and we value the memories of teams and seasons, coaches and teammates who meant so much to us. You miss the beauty of the fields, the camaraderie developed through practice after practice, road trips on vans and buses; you miss the feeling of wearing a uniform you love very much, the feeling of support and friendship you feel from those who attend your games, the feeling of complete exhaustion you achieve after a maximum effort. You want just one more chance to take the field, to compete, to see your teammates surrounding you.

So, when you take to the fields on Saturday, do so with pride in the spirit and ethic of St. Andrew's athletics—know that great people, great athletes and coaches have come before you. Play with pride, with courage; play with joy and teamwork; play with poise, dignity and respect for your opponent; play to reflect the power and spirit of your teammates, coaches and School. Play with passion and courage; don't cut corners; don't settle for mediocrity; pick up your teammates; support all those who play, especially those who contribute to the team on the bench; honor managers, coaches, referees, timekeepers; express appreciation for good play by your opponents. Dress well, behave well when you visit opposing schools; clean up after yourselves; respect the property and facilities you use; honor the men and women who prepare your fields, wash your uniforms, schedule your games, attend to you in the training room. Thank bus drivers, clean busses, do community service as a team, coach youths in the Boys and Girls Clubs. Live, play and serve so that your team expresses a spirit of humanity, fellowship and generosity.

Seek, as you play, to embody the values and spirit of your School at its best.

On Excellence

January 2009

Over the break, I read *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell's recent book exploring the source of highly successful careers in various professional occupations. As he analyzes the lives and successes of athletes, musicians, businessmen and entrepreneurs, Gladwell makes the claim that those who succeed most in world society do so through the deep commitment of hard work. To be specific, Gladwell cites the figure of 10,000 hours as the necessary boundary of commitment:

The emerging picture from such studies is that 10,000 hours of practice is required to achieve the level of mastery associated with being a world class expert in anything," writes neurologist, Daniel Levitan. "In study after study of campuses, basketball players, fiction writers, ice skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals and what have you, the number comes up again and again. No one has yet found a case in which world class expertise was accomplished in less time. It seems it takes the brain this long to assimilate all it needs to know to achieve true mastery.

Gladwell goes on to describe other crucial factors that contribute to the development of outliers like the Beatles, Bill Gates and professional athletes (they had talent, they were in the right place at the right time and had remarkable opportunities for concentrated work and practice), but tonight it is important for me to emphasize the 10,000-hour rule. Gladwell presents compelling research that claims that if you want to become excellent in a discipline, you must practice, work, rehearse, concentrate, strain, revise, endure and persist, long after others have given up in laziness, indifference, distraction, defeat or despair. In short, people who care about doing quality work invest in the time it takes to become proficient and ultimately excellent.

Gladwell points out that Americans often do not understand exactly what hard work implies or entails. In a particularly interesting chapter, he analyzes the time, care, attention and commitment Chinese farmers put into their work on rice paddies. He locates the Asian ethic of hard work, resilience and commitment by citing Chinese proverbs:

- Hard work, shrewd planning and self-reliance or cooperation with a small group will in time bring recompense...
- No one who can rise before dawn 360 days a year fails to make his family rich.

You who live in the world of distraction need to ask what an Xbox or video game or cell phone adds to or robs from your life on a daily or weekly basis. Research this yourself—for a week, prepare a time log that enables you to document how you use each half hour of your day. Cross out eight hours for sleep. Assess how you spend your 16 hours of life every day. Could you find time to be a better mathematician, scientist, reader, squash player, musician? Gladwell implies that, quite literally, the door is open for sustained, concentrated work and progress. It is not a question of talent, natural ability—it is a question of passionate intention. All we have to do is commit ourselves.

But here is my main point tonight. We work at St. Andrew's to inspire young men and women to be of good character, to express and enact kindness, empathy, compassion, courage and responsibility. We expect you to care for others, think and act for the betterment of others, stand up for goodness, for the poor, the invisible and the disenfranchised. But the development of character, I suggest, also requires at least 10,000 hours of practice, habit development and formation and experience in the field. Developing character and decency is not the work of a moment, the rhetoric of a catalogue. It is hard work, and work worth the investment of time and energy. How do we educate for the development of character? How do you learn the principles, habits and discipline of good character?

You have to live in community, in diversity. You have to serve and practice living, feeling and existing in another's position, perspective

and emotional life. And to live you have to take risks, embrace uncertainty and insecurity and renounce once and for all the habits that make us petty, cruel, vain, self-satisfied, complacent and mean. You have to read and enlarge your capacity for empathy, for imagination, for the development of a global perspective. You have to learn how to communicate, to listen, to appreciate the worldview of those who live and think differently than you. You have to learn how to connect to nature in a spiritual, authentic and inspiring way. You have to discern your responsibility for stewardship of the natural order. You have to learn how to share, how to give, how to serve. You have to develop a respect, a reverence for good work, and for the effort, determination and energy good work requires. You have to learn to live in community and to live alone. You have to learn how to be courageous and assertive even when you are afraid, persecuted or misunderstood.

You see, the ethical experiment I keep talking about is 10,000 hours of work, play and living in a community that tries to enact a culture of radical hospitality and empathy. If you practice here, if you become an expert in the art of human relations here, you can change the world.

It is really not that difficult to set a goal, a high standard for character. Think now of an adult, a man or a woman you admire. Chances are the adult will have many of the following characteristics:

- she is mature, responsible, reliable and discerning.
- she embraces an ethic of work, of resilience and of commitment.
- day in and day out, night in and night out this person works with passion, skill and intention. She works in such a way to make others grow, thrive and develop as leaders and citizens.
- she embodies a patience, a humility, a kindness, whatever the situation or crisis.
- she reads, learns, grows and develops each day of her life, refusing to settle for easy, pat answers or ready formulas. She strives to understand the large central questions and challenges of humanity.

- she embodies a vigor, a sense of humor, a love of life and people in all she does.
- she treats all men and women with ultimate respect and honor, all the time in all circumstances.
- she possesses the capacity to love and care for others, to sacrifice for the good of others, to teach, mentor and inspire young people.
- she lives with honesty, integrity and high principle.
- she has the courage to admit her faults and mistakes and the grace to learn from them.
- she never gossips, mocks, demeans or ridicules another person.
- she lives with a reverence, respect and appreciation for the natural world and humanity's place in the world.

I could go on, but you get the idea. We are surrounded by adults in our lives who have the capacity to make us grow and become better people. Invest 10,000 hours and then a lifetime to model yourself, your values, your behavior, your language against these best selves. Ask your mentors, role models and heroes how they grew up and moved from an embrace of what George Eliot called “radical egotism” to an embrace of an ethic of care, responsibility and creativity. They will identify moments of epiphany, role models, mistakes, redemption and recovery. Their stories, their stability, courage and honor will help you undertake the journey towards an embrace of goodness of which you and St. Andrew's can be proud.

On the Value of Errors

November 2007

Math teacher Mrs. Klecan has developed the concept of the error notebook to help her students learn from their mistakes. The very notion and purpose of the notebook is seemingly simple and obvious. Student errors are not simply grounds for the deduction of points or the application of a red marker on the page. Rather, student errors are the signs, the indications for new strategies of learning, understanding, rehearsing, practicing. Great teachers see mistakes as the sign for a return to course material and concepts, the sign for new approaches towards teaching and learning. Educational reformer Grant Wiggins wrote several years ago that unreflective teachers employed the philosophy: "Teach, test, hope for the best," an approach that implied that teachers bear no sense of responsibility for the mastery their students exhibit or fail to exhibit. In contrast, Wiggins argues that the great teacher is constantly re-teaching, refocusing his/her approach, strategy and methodology. Mistakes and the analysis of mistakes lead to stronger teaching, more dynamic instruction and learning. Mr. Kemer recently commented on the vital importance of the examination of errors. He wrote: "Student learning does not take place in a vacuum. Misconceptions derived from common experiences and received knowledge often hinder scientific understanding. These can be very difficult to displace. Instruction needs to be explicitly designed to address these. This begins with a teacher's awareness of common misconceptions which require research and paying very close attention to what students say and write (i.e., going beyond mere correction)."

A few weeks ago, I asked Mrs. Klecan to share an error notebook or two with me. When I asked to see a notebook, I thought she would

bring me a model drawn from the students she teaches this year. Instead, I soon learned Mrs. Klecan had kept the error notebook for each one of her students she had taught over the course of her career at the School. My curiosity deepened when she brought me three or four examples.

I opened the books and discovered the minutes, the specific description of an intellectual journey nine months long for each of her students. Mrs. Klecan's students not only wrote down and then corrected their errors; they wrote explanations for their mistakes as a way of demonstrating an authentic understanding of why an error occurred and how they could avoid such errors in the future.

In their notebooks, students identify a variety of explanations for their errors, lack of time, inattention to detail, misunderstanding of concepts, the question or the methodology. But whatever the reason or explanation, the Klecan approach is clear. You perform, study, assess and reflect on your mistakes; you learn from your mistakes; you move towards mastery and understanding through the analysis of human error. You practice, assess, practice, assess and practice until you achieve true understanding and mastery in the same way that a musical ensemble or sports team rehearses and practices each day to develop the quality of their performance in the performance hall or field of play. And through the specific study of student error, the teacher appreciates the misunderstandings students experience with material. And she adjusts and teaches accordingly. The quiz, test paper becomes a beginning of a conversation about learning, not the end, not a game of hide and seek with the teacher emerging victorious.

The more I thought about the reality and symbolism of the math error notebook, the more I discovered the potential and significance of the concept. We should, I decided, develop an error notebook in all of our classes as a way of charting our emerging mastery of skills that are simple, complex and important. We should, as teachers, strive to learn more from the mistakes our students make, both to help us understand how we can change and adjust our teaching in dynamic and important ways and to help us understand what it means to go beyond "mere

correction.” It is the difference between going through the motions and truly committing to powerful teaching and learning.

But, I also realized that we should keep a literal or figurative error notebook in the most important course we all, young and old, are taking—the course on life. Can we, do we have the courage to recognize and acknowledge our mistakes and errors? Once we admit our mistakes, do we have the courage both to analyze and interpret the root cause of our shortcomings and do we resolve to improve, develop and inspire change in ourselves?

Last year, I sat with a former parent and friend who is the chair and CEO of a major investment firm, and a man of uncommon wisdom, brilliance and energy. Each year he interviews a select group of candidates to join his company. The competition to receive an interview with him is unbelievably intense, and candidates arrive in his office ready for the interview of a lifetime. He told me that he begins his interviews with prospective employees with the following question:

Please tell me,” he says, “about the biggest mistake you have made in your life. Tell me about the mistake—tell me how you dealt with the mistake and how you learned from this experience?

My friend uses these questions to assess the candidate’s honesty, candor, courage, resilience and humility. He realizes that his candidates arrive for their interview with résumés and qualifications that proclaim brilliance, mastery, control and perfection, and he therefore wants to see if his candidates know how to critique their decisions, to analyze their mistakes, to develop strategies to learn from them. He expects his candidates to know themselves well enough to make a strong and accurate self-assessment, and he expects his candidates to be able to be self-critical and courageous in their assessments.

My friend reported that this question had the capacity of completely disrupting the equilibrium of the most superficially, flawless candidates. They either could not bear to acknowledge their own fallibility or they believed that an admission of weakness would lead to a complete loss of credibility before a powerful employer. In contrast, the more mature and discerning candidates viewed mistakes and

errors as important moments for study, reflection, transformation and renewal. These candidates were flexible, creative, generous, passionate and confident. They had learned how to admit, embrace and own their errors. They were resilient and able to handle the admission of error. They were able to articulate how they had made errors and how they had learned from the painful experience they confronted.

On December 4, 1950, diplomat, historian and political scientist George Kennan wrote the following letter to Secretary of State Dean Acheson:

In international, as in private life, what counts most is not really what happens to someone but how he bears what happens to him. For this reason almost everything depends from here on out on the manner in which we Americans bear what is unquestionably a major failure and disaster to our national fortunes.

Kennan refers here to the implications of aggressive, military action in American foreign policy during the early days of the Korean War, but he could just as easily have referred to any of our mistakes as a nation.

But our political and media culture craves the appearance of perfection, and it is the rare leader indeed who has the courage both to admit mistakes and develop new initiatives and approaches as a result of such mistakes. Our media culture seeks and rewards more style than substance, more sound bites than coherent discussion and deliberation from our leaders.

And perhaps we as a culture, we as schools and colleges embrace a superficial and empty worship of perfection, an ethos that forces students to fear failure, to greet mistakes with anxiety, fear and desperation. After all, one mistake can lead to dire consequences, we think. And so we live superficial lives designed to impress others by our veneer of perfection. We never learn from our mistakes because we refuse to admit them, to see them, to analyze them, to overcome them.

As a school, as an academic community, we seek to learn the skills of deliberation, discernment, reflection, inquiry and analysis. We seek to embrace an approach to life and to learning that is careful,

composed, thoughtful and intentional. But along the way, we are prone to errors in judgment, attitude and behavior. We can, I believe, learn a lot from our mistakes, and we can, I believe, learn that violations of the humanity of other people, violations of the spirit of trust, openness, solidarity and compassion must be acknowledged, confessed and redeemed.

The error notebook of life is full of moments of intentional meanness of spirit, acts of greed, selfishness and pettiness, moments of inattention, indifference and coldness. The error notebook of life also contains moments of cowardice, paralysis, indifference and passivity. We can acknowledge these moments, study them, reject them and move on with a new spirit of faith, hope and renewal.

Here is how Kennan's letter to Acheson ends:

If we accept our failure with candor, with dignity, with a resolve to absorb its lessons and to make it good by redoubled and determined effort, we need lose neither our self-confidence in our allies nor our power for bargaining. But, if we try to conceal from our own people or from our allies the full measure of our misfortune, or permit ourselves to seek relief in any reactions of bluster or petulance or hysteria, we can easily find this crisis resolving itself into an irreparable destruction of our world position and of our confidence in ourselves.

Kennan's point is brilliant. We will all make mistakes; but, if we accept our errors with dignity and a deep and authentic resolution to improve, develop and transform our lives, we will emerge stronger, more resilient and eager to do amazing things in and for this world.

On College Admissions

January 2007

For a number of weeks, I have been thinking very carefully about the current state of education and the college admissions process in the United States. And tonight I would like to share a few of my thoughts with you.

Let me say at the onset that any competitive process I know of has the power to make or break us. We can either respond to the rigor of a competitive situation by asserting and affirming old fashioned virtues like hard work, determination and resilience or we can react to stress and pressure by either quitting the field altogether or distorting our values.

Now the reason I am concerned about the effect the college admissions process has on students, schools and education in general is that competition at highly selective and selective colleges has never been more fierce than it is today. The number and quality of applicants to such colleges and universities has risen dramatically over the past ten years, and the standards and qualifications for admission have risen dramatically as well. Some of your teachers and parents may have joked with you and told you that they would never be admitted to their own colleges today. Actually, they are not joking...

There is a certain irony to this situation. As competition for places in selective and highly selective colleges has increased, the number of colleges and universities in the country doing exemplary work with undergraduates has risen as well. But the public reaction and the consumer reaction have not really changed over the past 50 years—the list of highly rated colleges and universities continues to reflect the names of exclusive and elite colleges of the past.

The American private school has, to a certain degree, lost its preferential place in the world of college admissions. Once the chief source of students who attended elite colleges in the early and mid-parts of the 20th century (St. Andrew's first Headmaster Dr. Pell used to convene meetings in his office along with Ivy League Directors of Admissions and applicants—Dr. Pell at those meetings would decide who got in and who did not) private schools now compete in a balanced way with public schools and international schools across the world. I think this change in the diversity of student populations at colleges and universities is something we should all celebrate and applaud. The old, exclusive system was hardly a competitive one; it was discriminatory and elite. Private schools can live in the past, lament the loss of their exclusive privileges and access, and refuse to embrace the challenges and opportunities of world class competition, or private schools can so buy into the new college game that in the process they lose their ethical and moral and intellectual foundation and turn themselves into marketeers of artificiality and pretense. Or, as in the case of St. Andrew's, we can accept the new world of competition, embrace intellectual, academic, citizenship and stewardship innovation and help change the very culture of the high school and college world.

I see a number of advantages to the new competitive culture we now live in. The highly competitive nature of admissions has challenged more students to work more intensely, rigorously—as standards and expectations have risen, students have challenged themselves with rigorous course loads and college-level courses. They work more constantly and carefully through four years of high school, knowing that colleges will no longer be satisfied with one semester of quality work in the junior or senior year. Students now know that, as Amherst College Director of Admissions Tom Parker once told me, great student achievement and accomplishment in the classroom is the product of “thousands of decisions made during the high school years.” You either commit to being a serious student or you go through the motions. By the end of your career, your teacher comments will reflect whether or not you have fully engaged in the academic enterprise at school.

Schools like St. Andrew's have worked with great attention and passion to clarify learning goals and objectives, to describe the skills and habits of mind we believe a St. Andrew's student should be able to exhibit during the course of his/her career at the School. We have sought to move away from a curriculum and teaching methodology that rewarded rote memorization towards a culture that celebrates student creativity, exploration and true understanding. We have worked and will continue to work with college professors to make sure we are preparing you for the work and challenge of college; we will continue to communicate with and collaborate work with the Collegiate Learning Assessment to measure just how well St. Andrew's teaches writing, problem-solving, analytical thinking.

As colleges and schools like St. Andrew's have sought to enhance the quality of academic programs, national surveys have emerged to confirm that American education is indeed at a crucial crossroads in relation to the world economy. The Report of the New Commission on the skills of the American workforce made the following observations this month:

1. The global 21st century economy will inevitably threaten American prosperity and leadership as highly educated workers across the world compete successfully for jobs at substantially lower wages than those expected by American workers.
2. As the global economy expanded, the United States has seen international competition in education overtake and outperform us. Thirty years ago the United States had 30 percent of the world's college students. That number is 14 percent today.
3. The Report indicated that the American economy can no longer be developed and expanded through an educational system built on the fundamental assumptions of the industrial age—whereas the early 20th century economy needed workers to perform routine tasks in a regular and methodical way, the 21st century economy

seeks workers who “have a deep vein of creativity that is constantly renewing itself, and on a myriad of people who can imagine how people can use things that have never been available before, create ingenious marketing and sales campaigns, write books, make furniture, make movies, and imagine new kinds of software that will capture people’s imaginations... The best employees will be looking for the most competent, most creative and most interactive people on the face of the earth.”

In his groundbreaking book, *The World Is Flat*, Tom Friedman argues that Americans in schools suffer from what he calls “an ambition gap.” He writes:

Compared with young energetic Indians and Chinese, too many Americans have gotten lazy. The real entitlement we need to get rid of is our sense of entitlement...

I heard a similar refrain in a discussion with consular officials who oversee the granting of visas at the U.S. embassy in Beijing. As one of them put it to me, ‘I do think Americans are oblivious to the huge changes. Every American who comes over to visit me [in China] is just blown away... Your average kid in the U.S. is growing up in a wealthy country with many opportunities, and many are the kids of advantaged educated people and have a sense of entitlement... The competition is coming, and many of the kids are going to move into their twenties clueless about these rising forces.’

When I asked Bill Gates about the supposed American education advantage—an education that stresses creativity, no rote learning—he was utterly dismissive. In his view, those who think that the more rote learning systems of China and Japan can’t turn out innovators who can compete with Americans are sadly mistaken.

One cannot stress enough: Young Chinese, Indians and Poles are not racing us to the bottom. They are racing us to the top. They do not want to work for us; they don’t even want to be us. They want to dominate us—in the sense that they want to be creating the

companies of the future that people all over the world will admire and clamor to work for. They are in no way content with where they have come so far. I was talking to a Chinese-American who works for Microsoft and has accompanied Bill Gates on visits to China. He said Gates is recognized everywhere he goes in China. Young people there hang from the rafters and scalp tickets just to hear him speak. Same with Jerry Yang, the founder of Yahoo!

In China today, Bill Gates is Britney Spears. In America today, Britney Spears is Britney Spears—and that is our problem.

So, we must embrace this challenge and combat the assumption that American schools and American students are soft, complacent, distracted and mediocre. You need to work hard, very hard to compete in the 21st century economy. But, as we embrace the challenges of the 21st century, we need to be careful to confront the distortions of competition and particularly of the college admissions process as well.

Unfortunately, this process has actually led to distortions in our society, our schools and in the lives of parents and adolescents. Whereas, the mission and objective of a great high school education should be to ignite a love of learning and a deep sense of imagination, creativity and intellectual exploration, while I believe the most important component of the high school education is to inspire you to become truly responsible, moral agents of change and transformation in our world, the college process can become strategic, artificial and ultimately empty. The obsession to control a standardized test score or a GPA can lead students into obsessive studying and cramming that completely removes the joy and purpose of learning and narrows the students' sense of individual and community well being. When civic and community service commitments become not a means of connecting to and caring for the needs and welfare of others but rather a way to pad or inflate a résumé, the lessons students learn is that service is a way to manipulate others into thinking they are compassionate and empathetic when in reality they are not. When students care more about pretending they are perfect and flawless than actually working on their own very human selves, when parents drive

and push students and carefully send the message that only one type of school is good enough for the cocktail circuit, students have been consumed and engulfed by a process that is in a quite fundamental way, mad. And the costs of this frenzy, this madness, this obsession, the costs of this culture of perfection, artificiality and pretense can be seen both in the mental health crisis on both American high school and college campuses. Quite simply, record numbers of college students are breaking down, feeling unprepared for the independence and responsibility of college life. The race for college admission leaves them unprepared for college engagement and completely disconnected from the real needs and concerns of the world community. These students are morally and spiritually adrift.

St. Andrew's has refused to allow this madness to distort and destroy the culture and mission of this School. You, as a student body, see scholarship and the life of the mind as a collaborative, exciting and fulfilling process, at least most of the time. You care more about connecting with others, caring for others, than you do about a mad, individualistic race to success. You are developing the skills that will enable you to be responsible world citizens and remarkable professionals.

A number of years ago, I had an epiphany of sorts as I pondered the new 21st century, frenzied college admissions process. I realized that the narrowing of the mission of the 21st century school to the one goal of college admissions would be the death of St. Andrew's as we know and love it. At a time when students and schools began to worship this goal of résumé building, test preparation madness, grade inflation, over-sized athletic programs and fierce, competitive, ruthless students, St. Andrew's asserted its mission—to prepare students to change, transform and heal the world. How petty, how humiliating, how corrosive to embrace the madness of the college game when we study Dr. King, read the words of Vaclav Havel, David Orr, meet Paul Farmer and other public figures who call to us and tell us that without our leadership, our commitment, our embrace of responsibility, our world will perish due to our indifference and neglect. Vaclav Havel said it best when he addressed the U.S. Congress in 1990. He said:

The salvation of the human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect in human humbleness and in human responsibility. Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe towards which the world is headed, whether it be ecological, social, demographic or the general breakdown of civilization, will be unavoidable. . . . We still don't know how to put morality ahead of politics, service and economics. We are still incapable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of all our actions if they are to be moral is responsibility. Responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my firm, my success, responsibility to the order of being, where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where and only where, we will be properly judged.

We have to continue to insist upon graduating not great multiple-choice testers but great creative thinkers; not strategic-driven and artificial people wired for their own success but balanced, optimistic, empathetic people who live not for themselves but for others. We have to continue to help you as students recognize the wide spectrum of colleges and universities that are indeed more than names but actually academics committed to the great tradition of undergraduate education. We need to continue to strengthen and cultivate a work ethic in our classrooms that leads to deep, authentic understanding and mastery of critical, analytical, problem-solving, writing and argumentative skills.

We need to think like Dr. King, Paul Farmer, David Orr, Vaclav Havel about what we are collectively doing to take responsibility for the world. If we keep our sights on the real questions facing our country, our world, we will defeat the pettiness, triviality and superficiality of this college game.

We, as teachers, need to understand the remarkable pressure this current system brings upon you as students; we need to teach you the skills that will make you independent, creative, curious, autonomous learners and give you time to fall in love with ideas and the pursuit of wisdom and to commit to causes that will change our world. We can ignite your curiosity and passion by assigning work that gives you

more opportunity for deep understanding and mastery. We should not be driving you relentlessly but awakening you to the possibility of intellectual achievement and creativity.

A St. Andrew's education is meant to prepare you to take your place as a responsible, engaged, passionate citizen, steward, patriot of the world, or in the words of David Foster Wallace, an education is meant to teach you "how to keep from going through your comfortable, prosperous, respectable adult life dead, unconscious, a slave to your head and to your natural default setting of being uniquely, completely, imperially alone, day in and day out."

On the Faculty

August 2006

What lives here and abides in the halls and campus of St. Andrew's is a deep appreciation and commitment on the part of teachers, staff members and students that St. Andrew's School is a good place, a unique place, a school of inspiration, hope and transformation. We appreciate what others and we have built, established, cultivated here. We take on the commitment and responsibility to nourish, care for and enhance the School's culture and ethos. Part of the magic of the opening of school arises from the zeal and excitement students, teachers and staff members feel about working, living and celebrating this concept of education.

We inevitably concentrate on what students learn at such a school, in such a community. We strive to teach young men and women to embrace a life of intellectual exploration and commitment, one that will enable them to be judicious, analytical, expressive, creative and discerning. We seek to encourage our students to be men and women of integrity, good character and courage. We work to teach our students that we as members of the human family have deep abiding responsibilities for the welfare of our fellow world citizens and the natural world we share and bequeath to those who follow us.

But for years, I have been keenly aware and appreciative that St. Andrew's is an equally magical place of transformation for those of us who serve on the faculty. I know personally that we as adults find meaning, inspiration and direction through our connection to and collective ownership of St. Andrew's. We become different, transformed, more interesting, passionate, idealistic, principled, kind, generous people because the School and our students, our colleagues ask the best of us.

Some time ago, in a speech to alumni, I spoke as passionately as I could about the gifts and sacrifices teachers at St. Andrew's made to create this educational experience for students each year, and one of our alums pressed me afterwards on the nature of that sacrifice. Did I mean teachers literally sacrificed their lives to their students? I clarified my remarks in this way. We do pour hours of time, energy and attention each year into our work as teachers, advisors, coaches, dorm parents, directors and mentors—we feel a passionate commitment to the development and welfare of our students. But we receive such monumental gifts in return. Our students respect us, emulate us and thank us for our gifts. The lives they live and the people they become affirm that every moment we worked was indeed worth it. Their energy, heroism and courage teach us to live with greater intention, optimism and idealism. They inspire us to be worthy of our roles as teachers and mentors to young people.

But there is more—we grow, develop, mature and flourish as adults because to live and teach at St. Andrew's is to live and embody the virtues of the School in the company of colleagues. We work and live together—we share the tragedies and joys of life—lives of 20-, 30-, 40-, 50-, 60-, 70-year-old men and women. We raise each other's children, race to the rescue when life becomes chaotic and confusing. We help one another through tough times; we keep in touch when our careers here end, and we pursue other opportunities. We are and remain family.

The only way to sustain and improve what is so good and rewarding in our professional adult culture is to resolve each year to live, work, speak and teach with generosity, humanity, patience, humor, love and courage. The only way to sustain and improve that professional culture is to take all that is petty and mean—all that is envious, selfish in our nature and reject it, both because we will wither and die as individuals if we live, speak and think that way—and because we can have no credibility with our colleagues or our students if we live such small lives.

For faculty, this commitment to deepening the culture of humanity means intentionally creating time and space to talk about the ideals we share, the mission we have adopted.

If we seek to be an academy of learning not only for students but for teachers, we must break out of the isolation of our own classrooms and departments and create a culture of innovation, creativity and thoughtfulness in the work we do together. We know very well the qualities of great teaching to which we aspire, but we also know that we need our colleagues to help us work towards the kind of ideals writers like Ken Bain have set for us.

- Great teachers “know their subjects well,” Bain observes, but great teachers learn, every day, from both students and colleagues—they exude an excitement about the life of the mind that is contagious.
- Great teachers, Bain suggests, “have an intuitive understanding of human learning,” but great teachers need to test their practices, assumptions, techniques and results with colleagues who offer a fresh perspective.
- Great teachers, Bain argues, “see their goal as not merely success on an exam but a sustained and substantial influence on the way their students think, act and feel.” Great teachers need to clarify their goals and assumptions with colleagues who also wrestle with these aspirations and seek to measure such goals.
- Great teachers, Bain argues, “believe fervently that every student can learn”—great teachers seek advice and counsel when they are struggling to teach a student effectively.
- Great teachers, Bain observes, “view education as important, serious and creative work”—teaching benefits immediately from close observation, close analysis, from revision, from refinement, from vigorous dialogues with and critiques from colleagues.

And so, we become better teachers by asking our colleagues to develop us, to help us see and evaluate what we most keenly wish to understand and assess in our own teaching.

In my notes for our faculty discussions this morning, I shared a powerful quotation about the ways adults serve as role models for our students. Louis Menand writes:

The only way to develop curiosity, sympathy, principle of independence of mind is to practice being curious, sympathetic, principled and independent. For those of us who are teachers, it isn't what we teach that instills virtue—it's how we teach. We are the books our students read most closely.

Menand is brilliant in his assessment that we teach “curiosity, sympathy, independence of mind, by being curious, empathetic, principled and independent.” But, we also teach and inspire one another as adults in the same way. Our colleagues’ approach to life, to teaching, to liberal arts education to a large degree influence us either to seek mediocrity or complacency or teach with passion, creativity and resilience. People and the places that enable and inspire them to gather can make us, in Dostoevsky’s words, “better than we ourselves are.” And that is precisely the magic of St. Andrew’s—here we can indeed transform and invigorate our lives as adults.

St. Andrew’s adults embody a community founded on ethical principles and Christian ideals. We live in a community that asks, nay demands, the best of us. We are responsible for improving the world in which we live. We are responsible for living out a commitment to justice, peace, respect for every human being. We are responsible for embracing diversity and sustainability. The students, Ted Sizer reminds us, “are watching”—do we live out our mission in our own lives?

In this way, St. Andrew’s embodies and articulates a response to an old, tired world gone mad. We have begun to do good and important work at St. Andrew’s on teaching civic engagement and leadership. We have begun to bring the dilemmas, conflicts, tragedies of the world to the moral, spiritual and intellectual attention of the community. We are formulating a deeper and more ambitious notion of citizenship and responsibility to our students and ourselves.

But we must continue to work hard, very hard, to articulate St. Andrew’s response to intolerance, war, violence, extremism,

environmental degradation, racism, classism, materialism and other forms of intolerance and violations of the human spirit.

To achieve these goals, our students and we, the faculty, need to live and learn from men and women who are alive, vibrant, creative, consistent, humorous, courageous. We need, our students' need, role models and mentors to rescue them and us from narrow, fearful, strategic thinking about our or their lives. We, the faculty, and they, the students, need us to have our act together every day.

How we manage the multiple tasks and responsibilities and anxieties we ourselves carry each day, teaches our students how to manage the complexity of their own lives. If they see us grumpy, tired, weary, inconsistent in our work, we as a community will lose heart, falter and lose our momentum, energy, ideals and ambition.

We have to be strong, resilient, optimistic and hopeful. We have to believe in the transforming power of education. That's what teachers do—they create a response, they embody a belief that through education our lives can be meaningful.

And at a time when our culture cautions us not to care or to work for others with too much attention, too much energy, I suggest we live with the philosophy of Dostoevsky's Father Zosima in the *The Brothers Karamazov*, "Work tirelessly. If you are going to sleep at night, you remember, I did not do what I ought to have done, arise at once and do it."

We have learned that one way to free our students from petty and strategic thinking about their education and their lives is to remind them that the goal of high school and college is to find a calling, what Douglas Heath described as what "we were meant to be and to do"; what David Orr describes as "that particular thing for which we have a great passion and which we want to do above all else." "A calling," Orr continues, "is about the person one wants to make of oneself; a calling is an inner conviction about what really matters in life and what difference one wants to make in the world." We need to remind our students of this opportunity and responsibility, even as the culture asks them to think of their lives as ones directed toward individualistic

goals and ambitions. And we need to ask ourselves how our teaching expresses our conviction about what really matters in life, how our teaching contributes to the world.

And ultimately, to be a great teacher you need to feel at the very core of your heart that what you are doing each day is noble, worthy of your best effort and transformative both for your students, your colleagues and yourself. Teaching at its best asks us to define what really matters in life—for we realize that long after the equations, papers and tests are completed, a particular approach to life, to creativity, to humanity, to responsibility will abide. Ultimately, we teach to make a contribution to the world, a world gone mad. Embrace this calling, this responsibility, this commitment to living a life of meaning and inspiration. Your every word, action and commitment will inspire and enlighten all of us in this room, and all who work as students this year.

Let me end with a quotation from senior scholar Hanna Gray of the University of Chicago, cited in Nannerl Keohane's book on education, *Higher Ground*:

Ultimately an ideal of education—what it should be about, what it should be for, how its worth should be assessed—is a statement about the future and the ideals one would wish to see realized in that future; a statement about human purpose and possibility, about the nature of human society, its needs and aspiration; about the character and direction of civilization; a statement, too, about the past, its models and meanings, the lessons it provides to be perpetuated or discarded.

Radical Hospitality

June 2007

Yesterday, in my remarks at the State of the School meeting, I described Presiding Bishop Schori's definition of the mission of the Episcopal Church as the art and practice of "radical hospitality." What Schori suggests is that the Episcopal Church School and parish do the most important work in our communities: to feed the poor, care for the afflicted and relieve the suffering.

I witnessed a shining example of radical hospitality here at St. Andrew's this year. As many of you know, Cristin Duprey, Class of 2004, died tragically in February after a car accident on Route 896. Cristin was a student at the University of Delaware, and her mother, Stacey '85, lives here on campus and works as Director of Girls' Residential Life and Associate Director of Admissions. At the time of the accident, Stacey was coming out of a meeting of our Admission's Committee; she was with Director of Admission Louisa Zendt, Class of 1978. The call came from a police officer that arrived at the scene of the accident after Cristin had been removed from the car and taken to Christiana Hospital. Stacey was told only that her child's cell phone had been found in the car and that she should meet Cristin at the hospital.

Louisa Zendt knew immediately that Stacey would need her accompaniment and support, so she drove Stacey to the hospital and then stayed by her side for the five days that Cristin spent in the intensive care unit.

When I arrived at the hospital an hour later, I learned that Cristin's injuries were serious and life threatening. I remembered that Andrew Mein's widow, Olivia, worked in the intensive care unit and would be

able to help us as we confronted this tragedy. Andrew, son of Nan and Simon Mein, was a graduate of St. Andrew's in the Class of 1990—he died in 1998 after a bicycle accident. Olivia was helpful when I called her and she continually helped us receive important news and perspective as the ordeal at Christiana continued.

The web of care, concern and radical hospitality grew with every passing hour. Stacey, Class of 1985 and member of the faculty, Cristin, member of the Class of 2004, Devin, Cristin's sister, member of the Class of 2010, all had remarkable friendships with members of the extended St. Andrew's family. Phone calls, e-mails and visits poured into the intensive care unit of the hospital, giving Stacey and her family support, love, encouragement and prayers. Our chaplains, members of the faculty, current students and alumni made trips to the intensive care unit. Evan Guthrie, spouse of a St. Andrew's teacher and an intern, spent his days and nights with the Duprey family. Present and former parents called or visited. Food deliveries poured in. The School arranged for overnight accommodations at area hotels. From tragedy and despair, came hope, community, love, commitment, faith and courage. Who, the medical staff wondered, were all these people?

When it became clear that despite heroic efforts from the medical staff, Cristin would not recover, Stacey made the heroic and courageous decision to donate her precious daughter's organs so that others might live in Cristin's spirit and love. This act of hospitality, compassion and courage came through the creation of the miracle of Stacey's faith and the power of goodness that refused to allow death to be triumphant.

In the midst of sorrow, tragedy and grief, we knew love, courage, optimism and new life. Three little boys live today because of Stacey and her family's ultimate act of generosity.

St. Andrew's alumni, faculty, staff, past parents, present parents and friends gathered in Harlem on a cold February day to celebrate Cristin's life and love. I sat at the altar, along with Treava Milton, Class of 1983, and Stacey's father, and looked at the St. Andrew's that appeared in the church that day. It was a spectrum of diversity: young,

old, current students, alumni, current parents, past parents, current Trustees, past Trustees, men and women of color, white men and women. It was a portrait of the power of our collective faith, hope and hospitality.

As we gather this morning to honor St. Andreans who we have lost along the way, let us honor them, pray for them, love them and celebrate them by living lives of radical love, charity and hospitality. It is what St. Andreans, at their best, do.

On Acceptance

September 2008

You might know that History Department Chair Lindsay Brown and five St. Andrew's students are joining others in the Diocese of Delaware in an examination and analysis of the Church's role in the American institution of slavery. The project will help us all understand the support and affirmation the church provided to slavery in our country: it will help us understand and analyze the past, and along the way, it may teach us all humility. If those who came before us professed a deep faith in God and sought to live with a spirit of love and compassion in their lives, how could they be blind to the grotesque and violent violation of the human spirit that slavery embodied?

Well, of course, such Christians worked very hard to convince themselves and assert that human beings made in God's image could only be white men and white women. In his book, *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus*, Peter Gomes, a professor and minister of color, described a moment when he sat in a Virginia church and thought of those Christians who had once worshipped there and found it natural to believe "that it was not wrong for Christians to hold other human beings in chattel bondage." He writes:

We are reminded, perhaps more than we would like, that more often than not, our ancestors got it wrong, and that being religious, or even Christian, did not spare them the errors of their day... That is why the most profound of all religious sentiments should not be certainty, which inevitably leads to arrogance, but modesty, which because of a generous God, leads to mercy and forgiveness.

On Thursday night, I introduced Bishop Wright by thanking him for his courage and leadership at a time of intense controversy in

the Anglican community. When the Bishop traveled to the Lambeth Conference with other leaders in the world, he did so with the knowledge that his community of bishops was split by the American Episcopal Church's decision in 2003 to ordain Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson's diocese chose him, elected him as their choice for bishop, for they had grown to respect him and revere him for his leadership, his courage, his spirit and his commitment to social justice. He also happens to be a gay man, living in a committed relationship with another man.

Bishop Robinson will visit St. Andrew's this November. But this summer, he was not invited, excluded from participation in the conference because of his sexual orientation, a decision Bishop Wright described as "a shame." Writing two years ago about the controversy surrounding his ordination, Bishop Robinson wrote these words to his congregation:

The drama over your election of me as your Bishop continues to play out. In the end, God will have God's way. Episcopalians in America and Anglicans around the world continue to seek guidance in dealing with the challenge this election presents. On a daily (and sometimes hourly) basis, I remember the phrase so often repeated in the Old and New Testament by the God who loves us: 'Be Not Afraid.'

I very much like the way Robinson expresses his faith in the church's ultimate awakening to the injustice and bigotry of present policies and perspectives: "God will have God's way." Robinson suggests that it may take time to move Christians, flawed as we are, insecure as we are, certain as we are, to the embrace of freedom and equal rights and social justice, but ultimately, through patience, sacrifice, faith and courage, the walls of hatred and contempt will come falling down.

For a number of years now, St. Andrew's has tried to awaken from the shame of intolerance towards gay men and women, gay boys and girls. When I first came to the School, a school of faith and learning was a hostile place for gay students, teachers or staff members, and I,

as an enlightened and educated person raised in a Christian tradition, viewed homosexuality as a disturbing deviation from the natural order, and I mindlessly used homophobic language in a sarcastic or supposedly humorous way. Obviously in the early 1980s, gay students, staff members and teachers lived and worked at the School, but they did so in silence, in anonymity, fearful of the language, attitude and culture of the School. In retrospect, nothing could have been more opposite to the teachings of Jesus than a particularly active and confident Christian form of exclusivity, fear and hatred. With the issue of homosexuality, we have repeated our old human mistakes, seeking sanction for our fears, assumptions and beliefs in a religious tradition that teaches us to give up our arrogance, our certainty, our desire to judge and decide who is damned and who is saved. Peter Gomes addressed this point eloquently:

If the gospel is truly good news, it has to be good news for everyone, for it is either an inclusive gospel, or no gospel at all... all these little systems have their day, and there are moments when they do appear to prevail, but the church, we know from experience, will eventually do the right thing once it has exhausted every other alternative.

The stigma of homosexuality within our culture has slowly begun to fade, notwithstanding the public shunning of Bishop Robinson this summer. Enlightened communities seek to embrace a concept of diversity that includes gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered people. But even in this more enlightened age, the prejudice against homosexuality can be strong and threatening—gay students, especially in high school, are vulnerable to feelings of isolation, fear and self loathing, and these emotions can leave gay students with little sense of hope and few connections to the world in which they live.

Bishop Robinson has the foundation of maturity, support and courage to know that his exclusion from the Lambeth Conference is not a reflection on his character, his identity and his spirit but on the narrow, rigid world of conformity and fear. But for young men and women, how can it feel to grow up in a culture that mocks, insults, derides and threatens that hidden identity? Dr. Michael Thompson visited

St. Andrew's last week and told us that 5 percent of boys know by age 12 that they are gay; nearly 4 percent of girls know by age 16 that they are lesbians. As a school of faith, humanity and hope, we seek to create a culture that is safe, affirming and accepting for our faculty, staff, students and alumni. We all share this responsibility of defeating the forces of intolerance, violence and hatred that affect those who are gay in our culture and world.

As I travel to meet alumni across the country and the world, men and women with same sex partners greet me and rejoice in the knowledge that St. Andrew's has made a commitment to an acceptance of sexual diversity. They remember and describe the pain, anguish and turmoil of living at St. Andrew's at a time when the School did not embrace gay members of the community.

Even today, our culture is riddled with homophobic assumptions, stereotypes and language. We use derogatory and homophobic expressions in a mindless way, never appreciating the threat, the condemnation, the ugliness of the words in the ears of a gay member of the community. We need to reject such language with the same ferocity that we reject language of racism, sexism and classism, for ultimately we share a responsibility for the kind of culture of acceptance, generosity and Christianity we create at St. Andrew's and the world at large.

An Extraordinary Week in American History

January 2009

The demands and challenges of exam week at St. Andrew's make it difficult to pause and reflect on the upcoming extraordinary week in American history, but this morning I want to share a few of my thoughts and emotions as we both celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and anticipate the inauguration of our first African American President, Barack Obama.

The juxtaposition of these two days is, of course, astounding and inspiring, especially for those of us who knew Dr. King's works, challenges and obstacles. Today, we remember that Dr. King's contributions towards the cause of justice, freedom and opportunity were indeed courageous and transformational for the country. As he combined a deep faith in God and America with a fierce sense of urgency and belief in the power of moral persuasion and non-violent resistance, King slowly awakened America not only to the grievous sins of the past and present; he found a way also to connect with and inspire Americans' best sense of ourselves as individuals and a nation.

In a compelling essay written in yesterday's *New York Times*, Anthony Lewis reviews Eric J. Sundquist's new book, *King's Dream*. Lewis reveals

his sense of astonishment at one of Sundquist's dramatic scholarly discoveries:

A remarkable feat of which I was unaware is that the last third of the speech, the part about the dream, was extemporized by King. He had a text, completed the night before. But as he was addressing the crowd, protesting the indignities and brutality suffered by blacks, he put the prepared text aside, paused for a moment, and introduced an entirely new theme, 'I have a dream,' he said. 'It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.'

'I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'

Sundquist and Lewis agree that the brilliance of King's speech and vision was the move towards an articulation of the challenge and opportunity for all Americans to join together and create a nation worthy of its lofty founding principles. This was a challenge, an invitation, an exhortation for America to move to change and to embrace its highest potential. He invited whites to participate in and join that struggle; he indicated that blacks sought full membership, participation in and responsibility for the mission and principles of the nation. As a boy living in Buffalo, New York, at this time, I knew intuitively that if King's call was not accepted by whites and blacks alike, the results would be the chaos, strife and bitterness of racial conflict.

It is, of course, particularly inspirational to know, now, through Sundquist's research, that the creation of a "new national scripture" was the work of the moment, the work of King's inspirational spirit, imagination and education. As he looked out at the massive assembled crowd in 1963, the sense of place, the sense of the history and potential of America brought passion, eloquence and power to his voice. Sundquist suggests that King knew somehow that he was failing to connect spiritually and emotionally with his expectant audience.

Coretta Scott King believed "that the words flowed from some higher place." Whatever the source of his inspiration, King's life as a

student, minister, orator and civil rights activist prepared him perfectly to go beyond the text and seize the moment.

Ultimately, as Lewis observes, King's vision of solidarity, collaboration and cooperation won the day. Slowly, but steadily, whites heeded King's call inviting them to fight for, expand and protect the rights and freedoms of all American citizens. Men and women of color took on newly available opportunities in education, leadership and civic engagement as the codes and injustices of segregation melted away.

Barack Obama, of course, is the inheritor of this legacy, and as he looks out on the massive crowd at his inauguration Tuesday, we will be thinking of the remarkable leap of faith and the remarkable sacrifices Americans have made to make this day possible. "We will remember that the White House was built by slaves, and the Lincoln Memorial," as Lewis said, "was dedicated during a segregated ceremony." We will remember those who lost their lives in the pursuit of this dream. We will remember that the power of education makes such social transformation possible.

St. Andrew's asserts that human beings have the capacity to change and redeem the world. If we are willing to dream, to sacrifice, to work for our highest ideals as a school and as a nation, we can collectively accomplish good and important things. As you watch the inauguration, take a few moments and reflect on the way humanity can move history from blindness to perception, from slavery to freedom, from emptiness to hope. We thank Dr. King for bringing us together and showing us the way.

ST. ANDREW'S SCHOOL
Middletown, Delaware