

President Sasseen, members of the faculty, members of the staff,

As we take our leave, the class of 1982 wishes to thank each of you for the instruction, the guidance and the friendship which you have given to us these past four years.

My classmates,

Gone are those nights of dorm room talks and hallway philosophizing, the conversers unaware of the tower bells marking yet another hour. Now, reflecting upon how swiftly those many hours passed, we savor each of the remaining few and listen to each peal of the bells with both the excitement of moving on to the new and the hesitation of relinquishing the old.

We came from Kansas City; we came from Ft. Meyers; we came from Windthorst. Our reasons for coming, the goals we pursued, seemed to be as diverse as were our homes. Indeed, during those first few days it appeared that the only common factor was that none of us had finished reading Catch-22, our first assignment. Though our reading habits have changed little, our unity has greatly increased. We soon learned that underlying the wide variety of origins and accents was a single dedication to the pursuit of excellence. We have shared a great deal in this pursuit, and though each remains a distinct individual, each has become part of a whole as well.

Together we have stayed up late puzzling over Eliot's poems and Einstein's theories; together we have risen early to watch for the ground-hog's shadow. The strength of others made many a problem weigh much less. Yet, on a day dedicated to saying farewell, we wonder whether the strong bonds of present friendship can endure the vicissitudes of time. Is ours a love which "cannot admit absence, because it doth remove those things which elemented it?"

I think not. As does John Donne's poem, my valediction forbids mourning,  
for though we must go, we "endure not yet  
a breach, but an expansion,  
like gold to airy thinness beat."

The gold that is our class shall spread across this country, and the  
bonds between us will lengthen, but they will not break.

There is another concern which dampens the joy of our last days  
together. Many worry that the harsh reality of the outside world will  
trample upon the ideals we have formulated here. Is there such a discre-  
pancy between UD and the "real" world? We have lost two friends, one to  
an accident, one to disease. Thereby, we learned that life should never  
be taken for granted. That is the real world. We have all been rainsoaked  
and hungry in a foreign land, only to have our misery relieved by the  
kindness of a stranger. That is the real world. We have studied the thoughts  
of men such as Socrates and Jefferson; men who dared to defend new ideas.  
Some of these men lived to see their ideas flourish; others died for their  
innovation. That, too, is the real world. We need not fear leaving UD,  
for though we shall certainly confront new and often unforeseen challenges,  
the reality which we have studied and experienced here will help, not  
hinder, our struggle to succeed.

Thus far, I have spoken only of why we should not apprehend the end  
of our undergraduate years. Before I close, I would like to address the  
question of what we are to become.

Simply stated, we are to become leaders. Simply stated, but not so  
simply accomplished. It will be extremely difficult, and usually unpopular,  
for us to block the path along which our country, our communities, our  
families now step. It will be even more difficult to turn them around and  
guide them in a new direction. However, whether one is a doctor, lawyer,  
teacher, businessman or artist, each must rise above the demands of their  
vocation and try to revive American dignity and self-respect. As spouses  
and parents we must restore permanence to the image of the family. As

members of communities, we must stop the nonsense in education and return to such fundamentals as ensuring that high school graduates are literate. As intelligent and capable citizens, we must replace the concept that freedom abolishes the distinction between right and wrong with the idea that freedom entails the ability and the responsibility to prevent wrongdoing.

As I have said, such efforts will not go unopposed or uncriticized. Do not mistake my ideals for foolish enthusiasm. Perhaps none of us shall be able to direct such changes, but can we succeed in life while denying the necessity of trying? As Winston Churchill once said,

"The only guide to a man is his conscience; the only shield to his memory is the rectitude and sincerity of his actions. It is very imprudent to walk through life without this shield, because we are so often mocked by the failure of our hopes and the upsetting of our calculations; but with this shield, however the fates may play, we march always in the ranks of honour."

Thank you.