

**Remarks from the President of the Delbarton Alumni Association, at the Fall Class Reps' Dinner at the Madison Hotel, September 27, 2017**

As we begin another year at Delbarton, we are reminded once again that every year brings change. This year we will recognize and reflect upon the service and accomplishments of our departing Headmaster, and we will welcome a new headmaster to lead us in the years ahead. We will celebrate the long run of a fellow alumnus as he built and led our successful lacrosse program, and we will wholeheartedly support his successor who steps into those shoes with high hopes, and with the young men and the tradition to back him. We will also remember loved ones who have been lost to us, some of them far too soon. We will do all of these things together as we look to the year ahead.

As a community, we draw our strength and our notion of “brotherhood” from doing these things together and over time, as we have always done. It is not the singular event alone that creates a community of brothers; it is the time leading up to the event and the time leading away from it – the time we spend together. As an Alumni Association and as a Board, we set goals for ourselves each year and then we work together to achieve these goals. It is not the heights we reach, but that “we never stop climbing” that makes us brothers. As a Delbarton family, in the past few months we have attended funerals and we have mourned together. It’s the support we provide to each other now and into the future that draws us closer. It’s not the moment we are cut down; but that “we grow back stronger” that makes us brothers.

Recently, I had the opportunity to hear Brother Paul speak to the Lay Board about the Rule of St. Benedict and about the community that the monks have established over time -- a community they maintain and provide selflessly for the benefit of the students, the alumni and the entire Delbarton family. He reminded us that what makes Delbarton unique is that Delbarton and St. Mary’s Abbey is their home, and so the monks are welcoming us to their home and teaching us at their home. It is this spirit of hospitality that forms the foundation of our community. As I listened and scribbled notes, I was brought back to my time as a student at Delbarton. Once again, Brother Paul was teaching me and this time a new light bulb went off in my mind.

Among the many gifts the monks have given to us, for me the greatest gifts are clearly the gift of brotherhood which we have learned and borrowed from their monastic tradition and the gift of their home which we share with them. With Homecoming season on our mind, as Alumni we are reminded that it is not the fact that we attended Delbarton many years ago that makes us brothers, it is that we return year after year, through the seasons, in the good times and in the sad times to our Delbarton home that makes us brothers. For this, we thank you.

**John Tonzola '95,**  
*President, Delbarton Alumni Association*  
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