

Trevone Quarrie

Saturday, June 8th

Class of 2019 Benediction

I was so excited to give this speech. I get the last hurrah. Then I realized, I would be the guy standing between all of you, and your major milestone. So I racked my brain for ideas, sowed seeds that bore no fruit, and pondered the meaning of existence. If I'm taking up 30 minutes of your time, it needs to be amazing. Then it dawned on me, there's nothing left to say. I realized that so much has been said, every single second slowly building to the moment when we toss imaginary hats in the air. So before I let you go, do one thing for me. Take a deep breath, calm your nerves, (the sun is shining/ it's not raining/ we're dry). *Can't trust the weatherman these days*. I want you to look to your left, then to your right. Soak in the people, get lost in the moment, we'll never get this back, so enjoy it while you can. Don't hold back the tears, there's no shame in crying, but don't let the tears drown your smile. Welcome to cloud 9. This is what it means to be flying. And the road here was rough, we all had our struggles. But the tough got going and it made us brothers and sisters or at least third cousins.

A part of me doesn't want to leave this stage. It means closing a chapter of our lives, it means turning the last page of a really good book you never really wanted to end, and you felt the ache in your soul when the cover started to bend.

If I could rewind time. I'd leave it all the same. The arguments, the embarrassments, the hiccups, and the shade. And you see those faces bright and proud, I know them by name. And I feel no shame in saying I learned the last one this May.

So breath. This is the last lap. Every day had a unique sound to it, and this is the last track. And before you go. I'll let you in on a secret. I was this close to never setting foot on this campus. My mother got the call that Morristown-Beard found a spot of my 14 hours before freshman orientation started, and the buses pulled away for Camp Bernie all those years ago.

It's trippy to think I would have never met any of you. My extended family was a phone call away from being strangers. I was a phone call from losing the place that raised me. It showed me the ropes. It helped me find my crimson crazy. Because I am overly cautious, unapologetically pessimistic, and depressingly honest. I don't make friends easy, really, I've always been an introvert. I wore the dullest, baggiest clothes I could find. They made it easy to hide, to lock away my shine. If that sounds nothing like me, you have yourselves to thank. So do one last thing for me on this very long list of one last things. Hold the hands of the classmates next to you. Go on. They don't bite. Now squeeze that hand. Pretend they'll fade away if you don't. Close your eyes. Take one more breath. Never forget that feeling.

Thank You.