



Prom Night Toast to the Parents and Men of the Class of 2020

Headmaster Dr. John Nagl

This is a bittersweet moment. If all were well, the trolleys filled with the members of the great Class of 2020 and their dates would be pulling away en route the Adventure Aquarium, and we their parents would be gathered together, waving goodbye, celebrating their youth and their joy on the cusp of adulthood.

Of course, all is not well. We are in a time of nearly unprecedented national hardship and turmoil, and this crisis is profoundly affecting all of our boys, but it is having a particular impact on this wonderful Class of 2020. They have infused all who know them with the special characteristics of this class—their kindness, their resilience, their brotherhood, the way they love their coaches, their teachers, and each other. It is simply unfair that they should not have the simple joy of being together on this night, this rite of passage, this marker of the successful completion of a difficult but rewarding Haverford School career.

Previous generations of Haverford School boys have faced great trials and tribulations as well. Members of the classes of a century ago marked off to the First World War; a generation later, another generation of boys fought in the Second. Haverford School men served in Korea and Vietnam, and many—too many—made the ultimate sacrifice while doing their nation's bidding.

But hard as the road was that those boys trod, they had a consolation that these boys do not to help them through the hard times. They had the enormous comfort that comes from brotherhood, from being able to lean—literally—on their brothers. These boys have had that basic human gesture taken from them, and so not only do they have to suffer the loss of so much of their Sixth Form year, they have to do it without their brothers' arms to comfort them, without their brothers' shoulders to cry upon. It is a brutal sacrifice.

I have been focusing on the silver linings of the dark clouds that confront our nation, and our school, during these trying times. If there is a silver lining to a lost Prom night for these young men, I hope it is that for the rest of their lives, they treasure the simple joy of being able to be with their friends, to reach out and touch their classmates, and that those lasting bonds that mark Haverford men are even stronger as a result of this time when we cannot be together in person.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in toasting these men of courage and compassion, of determination and of kindness, the men of the Haverford School Class of 2020.