

Cadden-Williams Prize Reading

Option 5 | Thomas Sabatino, Class Speaker, NFA Class of 1976

We gather in this place to say a few words on graduation, get our diplomas and many awards and then go home. But before we leave this place for the last time as one body, we must consider what lies ahead. The words I say will be lost to the winds of time. But the message I try to convey must be carried on throughout your lives and then through to your children and so on. This message has been carried down through the ages and must, once again, be given to the next generation.

There are four basic attributes a person must possess in order to succeed: Knowledge, ability, confidence, and personality. If an individual lacks knowledge, he doesn't know how to do the job. Without ability, he can know how to do it but be unable to perform the task. Without confidence, the person soon loses heart and does not strive to attain. Without a distinct personality, he is just another face in the crowd. The four qualities represent a combination which constitutes a foundation upon which can be built a successful career in any line of endeavor. Without these you will inevitably fail; but with them you can attain the heavens. Cultivate these four, let them grow and then use them when you face the challenges of the future.

Today we strike out into the chilling realities of the true world. We have been pampered within the comfy confines of this school, sheltered from most of the harshness of life. We must leave our securities behind and prepare to face the challenges of a tough and difficult climb to success. I'm sure you have been told many times that you must fight to make it in this world. This is very true. But no matter how hard we try, most of us will fail at some time. The first few years after we leave NFA will be extremely hard whether it be the difficult times at college or the trying first years of a job. But we must keep on struggling through these difficult times. The individual who is going to succeed in this world is the one who, when he or she is beaten down like some forgotten fighter, uses their last ounce of strength to rise again and face the challenge a second and a third and a fourth time and as many times as it takes to succeed. That person cannot, will not fail.