

Thanking the 2011 Henley Crew

Will Robinson, Jul 5 2011

To the Boys' Varsity Eight,

On behalf of all of us at St. Andrew's, I congratulate you on your historic and magnificent performance at Henley. From the day I watched you in the cold and rain as you defeated St. Joe's Prep on Noxontown Pond, I knew you were destined for a great season and a memorable trip to England.

A number of years ago, a knowledgeable rowing alumnus predicted that the new 21st century era of athletic specialization and the expansion of rowing programs at large public and private schools would ultimately end the proud tradition of exemplary rowing at St. Andrew's. He made a compelling argument, but over your careers at the School, you have proven him wrong. Yes, we compete against schools with hundreds of rowers who work 12 months a year for the opportunity of a Stotesbury or Henley title. Yes, more and more schools have joined the rowing community. But you and the entire men's and women's crew programs at St. Andrew's have shown the power of the St. Andrew's spirit and tradition.

The coaching of Lindsay Brown was superb: so wise, patient, inspiring and passionate; your senior leadership was exemplary; your commitment to excellence on and off the water inspired the entire School community. You represented so well the intellectual, ethical and moral values and virtues of our School at its best.

You return champions—champions because you worked so beautifully together, champions because you set audacious goals and worked and strained and sacrificed to achieve them, champions because you learned how to find meaning and heightened attention and effort through defeat, champions because you won with such grace and class, champions because you represented your School and country with such courage, dignity and joy.

I have learned that great athletic teams stay together for a lifetime, supporting one another through life's journeys and struggles, celebrating moments of great joy and easing life's tragedies through the expression of love and friendship. I have learned too that athletics at its best teaches us to be resilient, tenacious, determined, ambitious and collaborative for a lifetime. The very qualities that made you graceful, brave and dynamic in your come-from-behind victories will put you in good stead for the rest of your lives. In essence, what you have just done is to pack what Sarah Abbott called your parachute of a lifetime.

I thank coaches Lindsay Brown and Morgan Scoville for their deep commitment to the spirit and success of the Henley experience, and I thank all St. Andreans who shared in the 2011 St. Andrew's trip to Henley as fans, financial supporters, parents and grandparents. Together, you helped inspire yet another quintessential St. Andrew's moment. Go Saints!

Tad Roach

