

Welcome Parents, Guardians, Special Friends and Family Members.

Good Morning Class of 2018.

Are you ready?

What a week this has been and what an amazing year has just passed. And here we are today—already! You are about to commence a new journey and we gather today, as we did last night, to celebrate your many gifts to this community and your extreme readiness for your next adventure.

I'm honored to be here with you this morning, in this chapel, as I too am commencing a new journey, as I take my second leave from St. Andrew's. My first departure was as you leave today, only just 40 years ago. And I take my second leave, now, as I retire. And in our connectedness of coming and going, I want to talk for a few moments about what your connectedness, to both this campus and the extended St. Andrew's family, will mean to you and for you, in the coming weeks, months and years.

As in many families, each and every one of you is different, and yet at the very core you are all St. Andreans. We are all St. Andreans. We smile to ourselves when we read the daily, early morning email from Chef Ray, that greets us with: "Good Morning Andreans!." And we smile when we see on Instagram the hashtag St. Andreans use, #Can'tHelpButConnect, along with photos of St. Andreans finding each other near and far. Just you wait and see, when it's you, far from campus, and you come across a St. Andrean, like a long lost sister, even one you don't know—that connectedness, it's a very powerful thing. My favorite Instagram photo, with the hashtag #CantHelpButConnect, is one of two young alums, about 6 years apart, finding each other on a beach near San Francisco. The caption on their selfie reads, "Thank you Felix duPont for the gift that keeps on giving, #canthelpbutconnect." So much love for our school and each other, and gratitude towards our founder, in that simple Instagram post!

I came back to St. Andrew's 21 years ago to join the faculty, because of just this, a connectedness, to a St. Andrean I did not even know. I was attending an admission conference when I bumped into the director of admissions from St. Andrew's. Upon seeing St. Andrew's School on his name tag I blurted out "I am a St. Andrean!" and I invited him to stay at our home whenever he traveled to the northwest for St. Andrew's. Always wanting to give back, why not save St. Andrew's the hotel bill. A year later, he did come spend the night, while recruiting in the northwest, and a few months after that he called to ask if I would consider coming back to St. Andrews to work in the admission office

and with the new Headmaster, Tad Roach. So be on the lookout for St. Andreans, those whom you know and don't know, for in your connectedness there is always a gift.

So why did I come to St. Andrew's the first time, and why did you come to St. Andrew's? I turned to our applications for insight. Finding my own archived application was disappointing. All I found was a two-page biography—my name, address, parents' and sibling's names, etc., but no personal statement as to why I wanted to come to St. Andrew's. Then I turned to your applications, knowing there was so much more. It was quite clear why you chose St. Andrew's. Here are a few of your personal statements on the question "Why St. Andrew's?"

When I opened the lid of the computer and searched the St. Andrew's Website, the very first reaction I received was amazement on how beautiful and majestic the campus was. I knew I had to see the campus with my own eyes. When we were driving through the campus, the same feeling of amazement rushed over me. When we entered the main building, I looked down the hall and saw a group of students laughing and having fun together as they went on their way to class. At that time, I realized just how tightly woven the community was.

And another:

There are many obvious reasons why I would love to attend St. Andrew's such as the prestige of the school, the rigorous academics and the beauty of the campus. But there are other much more important reasons why I would treasure the opportunity to be accepted to St. Andrews. Through reading about your school and hearing from my brother, I discovered how important character building is to your school. The ideas of responsibility, respectfulness and leadership come to my mind when I think about good character. The goal of endeavoring to instill these qualities into all of your students is very important to me... Another reason why I want to go to St. Andrews is the type of students that go to the school. I want to go to school with engaged students. The last reason why I would like to attend St. Andrews is because my brother currently attends and he is having the time of his life.

And finally, on ethos:

For the record, the reason I am interested in attending St. Andrew's School is because of its ethos. My interviewer introduced me to this word when I told him that I loved the "chi" at the

school. Chi is the word we use in our home to describe the presence of unseen forces. It is a remarkably strong feeling you get in certain places or with certain people and it can be good or bad. After my interview, I looked up what the word ethos actually meant and found that it was originally a Greek word meaning character that also describes the guiding ideas or beliefs that characterize a community. Over the past few months, I have visited several boarding schools and I had a very clear idea about what I was looking for when I finally made it to St. Andrew's. While there were certain things that I liked about each school, none of them felt like eating macaroni and cheese in the bathtub. When I came to St. Andrew's, I found all of the things I had been searching for in a single place.

In these statements made by three classmates, I hope you also heard your own words, remembered your own reasons for taking that leap of faith, to leave everything familiar at home, to come to this beautiful campus. This place where we live and learn and play and challenge each other, where we learn from and respect different perspectives, as we become our very best, realizing that the world needs our very best. And I hope that you would all agree with me today, looking back, what a great decision you made, to come to St. Andrew's! You came to be engaged, to be known and loved, and you indeed became your best self and you gave each other the opportunity to do the same. And yes, the world needs you, and you are ready.

As you leave today, understand the power of your connectedness and have and show gratitude for the gift of being known and loved at St. Andrew's. As you go forward there will be moments when you need to call on these resources deep within yourself. Moments when you have doubt or find obstacles that seem insurmountable. And yet, know that you are connected to a greater body of support, the ethos, chi, and community of St. Andrew's, that expects so much of you, yes, we have expectations that you will use the privilege of your excellent education for good, and yet you should also know that St. Andrew's will always be there for you. We have your back, no matter where you are.

A year ago, I learned that one of my advisees, from the class of 2009, comes to our campus now and again for her own refueling, and to pay homage and show gratitude for her St. Andrew's experience. When her life gets a little crazy as a member of the White House Press Corps, she drives the 2 hours from DC to come re-center herself, to sit in a red Adirondack chair, to walk our woods, to visit the T-Dock and to sit in this chapel. She says she leaves stronger, every time she leaves. I know that feeling, that sense of "I am who I am because of St. Andrew's" and every time I come and go I feel well fed,

stronger, and better prepared to meet the work and world ahead. This feeling never goes away. In my early years, after my graduation, I carried my little red SAS prayer book, the one you are given today, as I moved from one college dorm and apartment to the next, and then on to my first house and the next. It is always on my desk, and has been for 40 years. It is my refueling place, near and far from campus. It reminds me of the power of Faith and Learning that I experienced here at St. Andrew's.

So when you leave today, with great joy and happiness, readiness and anticipation of your greater freedom, greater challenges, and greater responsibilities, I hope you take with you a sense of being connected, known and loved. I hope you will feel gratitude for your connectedness, and regardless of your faith, I hope you will always feel connected to the ethos of Faith and Learning at St. Andrew's. And finally, know that just as you have heard said over and over again, at the end of every birthday announcement made in the dining hall, "and the whole school, we love you".

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Baccalaureate Chapel