

Commencement Speech 2009

Good Morning and Welcome President Scott, Members of the board of trustees, distinguished guests, faculty, administration, family, friends and of course the Class of 2009. After four or more years of hard work we have arrived at this important moment in our lives. Commencement, as the event suggests, today marks a new chapter in our lives. However, I would be remiss if I did not formally thank the people who have helped me get this far.

First and foremost I must give God the Praise. Without him nothing is possible and for me I am so thankful of the many blessings I have received that I will never be able to number. Second I would like to thank my family. My parents: Mom, I thank you for the sacrifices that you have made whether big or small. Though I may never know them I know that I would not be here today if you did not make them. Dad I thank you for your friendship, for giving me a listening ear when I need it and of course money when I needed it. I love you both. I would like to thank my siblings, Dominique and Christine, Stephan, thanks for your patience with a finals stressed sister, you were patient with me and understood my non-verbal communication. To the rest of my family and friends thanks for your love and support.

Being an active Adelphi student, I have spent much of my time outside the classroom. Getting involved and being a member of different clubs and organizations I have learned important leadership skills that have truly enhanced my educational experience. For this I thank the Center for Student Involvement. To the entire staff thank you for pushing the students to make a difference on this campus and in our community. To this I must also thank the class of 2009 executive board, all the members past and

present. Thanks for your dedication, and your work behind the scenes to make the years spent here at AU great.

Last but not least, I must thank the professors and classmates that have made Adelphi University a place of growth and learning. Each year I have met students and faculty who have raised the learning bar, challenging us to reach for a new level of learning. That will help us to impact the world around us.

Reflecting on the past four years at Adelphi I have learned many life lessons that I believe have made me a better person and will help me in the future that awaits me, and in particular I'd like to share 3 important lessons with you.

In a freshman seminar class in history taught by Professor Hidalgo, I discovered my passion to study history. Studying the past has helped me gain insight into our present and I believe will help me to be a productive member of society in the future. It is through an historical context I have learned life lesson number one: Build and not destroy. This lesson can be seen by looking at ancient civilizations and rulers of the. Often when conquering nations wished to acquire territory from neighboring nations, rulers would invade and destroy everything in their path. Burning houses, taking prisoners and establishing new regimes, the rulers wanted to rid their new territory of past influences and leave their mark. However, these acts greatly cost the societies in which they ruled. In the process these rulers often destroyed important artifacts, works of art, and documents. Items that could have been used to uplift the society were destroyed through one's own selfish rule. This illuminates rule number one. Never be quick to destroy the work of those before you. Learn to build on the advancements of the past--

using present knowledge to repair mistakes, bringing minds together, taking advantage of the work of our predecessors to make a bright future.

Life Lesson #2: You were Born an Original don't die a Copy!

Adopting this phrase from a John L. Mason book, my father has been a strong advocate of this concept. Each person sitting here today was born an original. Endowed with special abilities and talents. It is our responsibility to use those talents to make a difference in the world around us. While at Adelphi our professors challenged us to study critically, to take a deeper look, past the superficial and to find the true meaning. It is with these valuable lessons we look at the world. Never relying solely on what others have said, but using our abilities and the skills we have learned to evaluate matters through our own eyes. Thereby developing a sense of self, and making lasting impressions on those around us.

And last but not least, life lesson number 3:

Change the World or Go home!

Roberto Clemente, baseball great and noted humanitarian, once said "Any time you have an opportunity to make things better for those that come behind you and you don't, then you're wasting your time on this earth." In the recent presidential election, our now newly elected president took us by storm with his campaign modeling the phrase "Change you can see." With a sudden burst, President Obama's campaign promise would soon become our motto. Change. For the first time in many years, we—the "apathetic generation" as referred to in the past—became visible in the political process. Partaking in voting drives, hosting student debates on the issues or creating face book discussion groups. We got involved. Not simply

to satisfy the critics who said we did not care but to be a part of shaping the bright future ahead. A future holds endless possibilities. Though Wall Street might not always agree with our current desires and wants, there still await opportunities to make significant contributions to our world. From grassroots efforts which aim to feed the children in our local neighborhoods to protecting endangered species across the world, you the class of 2009 must change the world!!! Take all that we have learned and use it dare I say it: to make this world a better place. Each one reaching one.

Today I stand here inspired about the possibilities that you will one day achieve. The cures you will find, the wars you will stop and the ideals you will instill in the country you lead. This is truly a beginning to a story replete with success. Of the graduating class of 2009, a group that changed the world and never looked back!

I would like to leave you with one of my favorite quotes, from MARGARET MEAD, renowned anthropologist.

“Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Thank you and congratulations!

