

**COMMENCEMENT REMARKS  
DR. TIM COLLINS**

MAY 2021

**SWORDS UP! SWORDS UP!**

**WELCOME CAV NATION!**

COME ON EVERYONE ... **SWORDS UP!**

ARE THERE ANY ALUMNI THAT HAVE RETURNED HOME FOR THE WEEKEND ... PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ALUM ... PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

FIRST RESPONDERS, MILITARY (ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE, RETIRED, OR VETS) ... PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN GLOBAL PANDEMIC ... PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

PLATFORM PARTY ... THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO CEDED THEIR SEATS SO THAT OTHERS MAY HAVE ONE.

A SHOUT OUT TO OUR CAMPUS POLICE.

A SHOUT OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE THIS WEEKEND POSSIBLE, FACULTY, STAFF, COACHES. COMMERCIAL PARTNERS ... THAT HAVE THE CAMPUS SO BEAUTIFUL AND ALL THE FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO US TODAY.

WE ARE GATHERED TODAY TO REFLECT UPON COUNTLESS HOURS OF STUDY, SEEMINGLY HUNDREDS OF TESTS TAKEN, HOURS AND HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR OTHERS, AND INTENSE INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC PREPARATION AND COMPETITION ... ALL LEADING TO THE COMPLETION OF A WALSH EXPERIENCE FOR AMERICA'S MOST RECENT HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES.

CONGRATULATIONS! ... TO EACH NEWLY-MINTED GRADUATE ... TO THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED YOU ALONG THE WAY ... AND TO THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF THIS DISTINCTIVE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY ON THE ROAD TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE!

ALL Y' ALL ROCK!

OUR 595 GRADUATES ARE A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS REFLECTIVE OF GOD'S PLAN AND THE WORLD HE CREATED AROUND US.

SOME OF YOU HAVE COME TO US FROM AS NEAR AS NORTH CANTON AND OTHERS FROM AS FAR AWAY AS RUSSIA AND UGANDA. YOU REPRESENT SIX (6) COUNTRIES AND 18 STATES. YOU ARE EARNING DEGREES IN 62 MAJORS. ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN (107) OF YOU ARE STUDENT ATHLETES.

TWO (2) OF THE INDIVIDUALS EARNING THEIR DEGREES TODAY ARE CHILDREN OF EMPLOYEES, AND 14 OF YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF OUR ALUMNI, CONTINUING THE TRADITIONS OF WALSH UNIVERSITY WITHIN YOUR FAMILIES AS LEGACY GRADUATES.

OUR NEW GRADUATES HAVE MADE US ALL VERY PROUD IN THE CLASSROOM AND IN THE COMMUNITY. YOUR ACADEMIC WORKS HAS BEEN AMAZING, AND YOU PERFORMED THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF SERVICE THIS PAST YEAR. WHEN I LOOK OUT ON YOU TODAY, I SEE IN OUR NEWEST CLASS OF WALSH UNIVERSITY ALUMNI A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR OUR NATION.

YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY AND HAVE EARNED – EARNED! – YOUR DEGREES.

NO ONE IS GIVING YOU ANYTHING.

WHILE YOU ARE EXCITED FOR WHAT TOMORROW MAY BRING, YOU MAY ALSO BE SITTING THERE PONDERING, “AM I READY TO FULFILL MY LIFE'S PURPOSE? AM I READY TO SERVE? AM I READY TO LEAD OTHERS? AM I READY TO GO FORTH INTO THE WORLD TO TAKE MY PLACE? ... IN SHORT ...AM I READY?”

THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION ... FROM A LOUD... EXUBERANT... PROUD CAV NATION... IS “YES!” ... YOUR WALSH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION HAS BEEN “ALL ABOUT” THIS VERY MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE: MAKING YOU READY.

WE HAVE TAUGHT YOU AN APPROACH TO EDUCATION THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL PROVIDES ... THAT FAITH AND REASON BOTH WILL LEAD YOU TO THE TRUTH ... THAT WE ARE TO UNCOVER AND DISCOVER THE TRUTH – NOT CREATE THE TRUTH, THAT THERE IS AN OBJECTIVE REALITY ... THAT YOU HAVE A REASON TO BE ON EARTH ... AND THAT YOU ARE EMPOWERED TO TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD WITH YOUR INTENDED PURPOSE TO FIND TRUE JOY IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.

JOY ... MUCH DEEPER THAN HAPPINESS. ST THOMAS AQUINAS TELLS US JOY IS THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

WE HAVE ALSO TAUGHT YOU – IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM – HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY ... DEAL WITH COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY ... DEVELOP AND EVALUATE OPTIONS ... AND THAT CHOICES THAT RECOGNIZE THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON MATTER, AS DOES YOUR INDIVIDUAL HONOR AND INTEGRITY.

THESE ARE LESSONS AND SKILLS THAT WILL SERVE YOU WELL ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.

NOW, I AM GOING TO PAUSE TO ASK YOU A QUESTION AND WOULD LIKE YOU TO RESPOND ... RESPOND LOUD ENOUGH THAT THE FAMILIES OF OUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – ALL THE WAY TO RUSSIA AND UGANDA – CAN HEAR US...

HERE IS THE QUESTION FOR OUR GRADUATES THAT REQUIRES A SIMPLE YES OR NO: ARE ... YOU ... READY?

YOUR INTERNSHIPS, GLOBAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES, SERVICE-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, AND ADVANCED STUDIES DID MORE THAN PREPARE YOU FOR THAT FIRST JOB OR CAREER ... THEY WERE DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU IN DISCOVERING YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE AND TO FINDING PERSONAL MEANING IN THE WAYS YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS.

ARE... YOU... READY?

IN OUR RESIDENCE HALLS, CLASSROOMS, ON OUR ATHLETIC FIELDS AND CAMPUS GATHERING SPACES ... YOU DID MORE THAN ENCOUNTER OTHERS.

YOU LEARNED THE LESSONS OF COMMUNITY AND SPORTSMANSHIP AND HONOR AND INTEGRITY. YOU LEARNED HOW TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR AND A GOOD FRIEND, AND YOU LEARNED WHAT IT IS TO BE “MY BROTHER’S KEEPER.”

YOU LEARNED THAT YOU CAN BE SUCCESSFUL WITH SOMETHING ... AND NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL AS SOMEBODY.

AND WHEN COVID CAME INTO YOUR LIVES YOU LEARNED THE INVALUABLE LESSON OF HOW TO ADJUST AND HANDLE LIFE’S CURVE BALLS, A LESSON THAT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY MAKE YOU MORE RESILIENT THROUGHOUT THE REST OF YOUR LIVES.

ARE... YOU... READY?

YOUR TIME AND EXPERIENCES IN THIS CATHOLIC ENVIRONMENT OFFERED YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS FAITH AND VALUES IN ACTION – FROM THE STAFF, COACHES, FACULTY, OTHER STUDENTS, AND EACH OTHER.

YOU LEARNED NOT ONLY HOW TO BE A LEADER IN SERVICE TO OTHERS ... YOU BECAME A LEADER IN SERVICE TO OTHERS.

ARE... YOU... READY?

THE TIME YOU HAVE SPENT HERE ON OUR CAMPUS IS PRECIOUS TO US. WE ARE HONORED YOU CHOSE WALSH UNIVERSITY FOR YOUR HIGHER EDUCATION, AND AS YOU EMBARK ON YOUR FUTURE, WHEREVER THAT MAY LEAD YOU, WE KNOW – AND YOU KNOW – YOU ARE READY.

SIXTY ONE (61) YEARS AGO, SEVEN (7) BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION STOOD ON THIS VERY GROUND AND IMAGINED A CATHOLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTED TO STUDENTS WHO WOULD WORK AND LEARN TOGETHER SO AS TO EVENTUALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.

THEIR CATHOLIC FAITH GUIDED THEM ... AND IT CONTINUES TO GUIDE OUR INSTITUTION TODAY.

WHILE THE BROTHERS NO LONGER HAVE A DAILY PRESENCE ON OUR CAMPUS, THEIR LEGACY IS EMBEDDED IN THE FABRIC OF OUR UNIVERSITY, AND WE PAUSE TO THANK THEM FOR HOW THEY HAVE SUPPORTED AND BLESSED US FOR THE PAST SIX DECADES.

WHAT A YEAR THIS HAS BEEN. OUR MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF 2020 WHO ARE WITH US HERE TODAY CAN ATTEST TO THAT AS WELL, YES?

WE HAVE FACED MUCH, ENCOUNTERED MANY CHALLENGES.

AND WHILE THERE MAY HAVE BEEN TIMES WHERE WE WERE DISHEARTENED, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE MADE IT THROUGH TO THIS MOMENT.

WE HAVE FACED THE CHALLENGES, AND WE HAVE PERSEVERED.

WE HAVE SEEN SADNESS YET RENEWED OUR HOPE.

AND WE HAVE RECOGNIZED THE VALUE OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OTHER AND LEARNED THAT ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – AND A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.

IF THERE IS A SINGLE LESSON THAT SUMS ALL OF THIS UP – IT IS THIS: LIFE IS DIFFICULT AND REQUIRES SACRIFICE.

YOU HAVE HAD THIS OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS LIFE LESSON THAN PROBABLY ANY GENERATION OF STUDENTS IN THREE DECADES!

AND I AM PROUD OF YOU FOR YOUR RESILIENCE, LEADERSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND THE CHARITY YOU EXTENDED TO OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC

SO HERE WE ARE.

YOUR TIME IN OUR COMMUNITY AS A STUDENT CONCLUDES TODAY, IN THIS MOMENT.

BUT LET THIS NOT BE THE END TO EITHER YOUR EDUCATION OR YOUR LEARNING.

I ENCOURAGE YOU... NO, I CHALLENGE YOU ... TO CONTINUE YOUR SELF-IMPROVEMENT... EVERY DAY ... FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES.

SUCCESS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS NEVER FINAL.

TODAY IS NOT AN END POINT BUT A JUMP OFF POINT ... THE MARK OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN ANEW.

I URGE YOU TO EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME BEFORE YOU AS YOU TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD WITH CONFIDENCE, WITH GRACE, WITH HUMILITY ... ALWAYS MEETING OTHERS WITH CHARITY AND KINDNESS – SPEAKING THAT LANGUAGE THAT THE DEAF CAN HEAR AND THE BLIND CAN SEE.

AS YOU STEP OUT OF THIS WALSH EXPERIENCE ... THE MOMENT HAS ARRIVED WHEN YOU MUST NOW STEP UP TO A LIFE OF SERVING OTHERS.

IT HAS BEEN OUR PRIVILEGE TO HAVE BEEN PART OF YOUR JOURNEY, AND WALSH UNIVERSITY LOOKS FORWARD TO ACCOMPANYING YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

ARE YOU READY? ABSOLUTELY ... YOU ARE READY!

AND WE PLACE INTO THE HANDS OF THE FIRST LADY OF WALSH UNIVERSITY – OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP – OUR PRAYERS FOR HER INTERCESSIONS FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUCCESS.

GOD BLESS YOU, WALSH UNIVERSITY, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

**WORDS UP!**

## INTRODUCTION OF ROBERT YATES COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

I HAVE THE DISTINCT PRIVILEGE AND HONOR OF INTRODUCING TO YOU OUR COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER FOR TODAY'S GRADUATION OF THE 57TH AND 58TH GRADUATING CLASSES OF WALSH UNIVERSITY.

BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBERT YATES WAS COMMISSIONED AS AN OFFICER FROM THE U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, WHERE HE EARNED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ENGINEERING. HE IS A DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE OF SQUADRON OFFICER SCHOOL, AS WELL AS THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND HAS COMPLETED NUMEROUS FLYING ASSIGNMENTS AND COMMANDED SMALL AND LARGE UNITS.

GENERAL YATES IS A COMMAND PILOT WITH MORE THAN 3,200 FLYING HOURS IN A VARIETY OF OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT AND HAS HELD TOUGH STAFF ASSIGNMENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

AFTER 30 YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE AND NON-STOP LEADERSHIP FOR HIS COUNTRY, GENERAL YATES RETIRED FROM THE AIR FORCE. IN 2014, HE WAS APPOINTED BY THE US CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS AS THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC PLANNING. IN THIS ROLE, HE OVERSEES THE PLANNING PROCESS AND EXECUTION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND OFFERS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP COACHING AND MENTORING THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE.

BOB YATES HAS SPENT HIS LIFE HEARING THE VOICE OF CHRIST AS HE SOUGHT TO PURSUE HIS LIFE'S PURPOSE FOLLOWING "THE WAY" OF CHRIST HUMBLY, FAITHFULLY, AND PERSISTENTLY. AS WE REFLECT ON THIS MOMENT WITH OUR SOON-TO-BE GRADUATES AS THEY EMBARK TO TAKE THEIR PLACES IN THE WORLD, IT IS GOOD TO HEAR THE VOICES OF THOSE WHO UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE IN THEIR EDUCATION AND FORMATION. WE ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE SUCH A VOICE HERE WITH US TODAY ... ALBEIT VIA COVID PRE-RECORDING ... PLEASE JOIN ME IN WELCOMING A TRUE SERVANT-LEADER, AN ADVOCATE OF WALSH UNIVERSITY, OUR 2021 SPRING COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER ... ROBERT YATES.