

2025 Commencement Script

Cecchini Alumni Arena

May 3, 2025

DR. TIM COLLINS REMARKS:

SWORDS UP! SWORDS UP!

WELCOME CAV NATION!

WELCOME FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS OF CAV NATION TO YOUR CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY. WE ARE HONORED WITH YOUR PRESENCE TODAY FOR THIS MOST SIGNIFICANT MOMENT IN THE LIVES OF THESE SOON-TO-BE NEWEST GRADUATES OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION!

SWORDS UP X 2!

ARE THERE ANY ALUMNI WHO ARE HERE WITH US FOR THIS SPECIAL OCCASION? PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED AS WE WELCOME YOU HOME!

WILL THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN THE CLASS OF 2025 OF OUR ALUMNI ... OUR NOW-LEGACY GRADUATES ... PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED?

FIRST RESPONDERS AND OUR MILITARY (ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE, RETIRED, OR VETS) ... THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO US! PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

FOR ALL OF THOSE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE ... IN CONSECRATED LIFE ...
PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

A SHOUT OUT TO OUR CAMPUS POLICE WHOSE ACTIVE PRESENCE
CONTRIBUTES IN SO MANY WAYS TO OUR SAFE CAMPUS TODAY AND
ALWAYS ... YOU HONOR US!

A SHOUT OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE THIS WEEKEND POSSIBLE –
FACULTY, STAFF, COACHES, COMMERCIAL VENDORS, AND PARTNERS –
AND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE QUIETLY AND
DILIGENTLY “BEHIND THE SCENES” PREPARED OUR CAMPUS AND ALL
OUR FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO US TODAY.

SIXTY-SIX (66) YEARS AGO, SEVEN 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 HEED THE WORDS OF BROTHER FRANCIS BLOUIN: “YOU
MUST MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

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

THIS YEAR’S 634 GRADUATES ARE A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS REFLECTIVE OF GOD’S PLAN AND THE WORLD HE CREATED AROUND US.

YOU HAVE COME TO US FROM AS NEAR AS NORTH CANTON AND AS FAR AWAY AS NEW ZEALAND AND NEPAL. YOU REPRESENT THIRTEEN (13) COUNTRIES AND 31 STATES. YOU ARE EARNING DEGREES IN 73 MAJORS. ONE-HUNDRED-AND-TWENTY-FIVE (125) OF YOU ARE SCHOLAR-ATHLETES.

TEN (10) OF YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF OUR ALUMNI CONTINUING WALSH UNIVERSITY TRADITIONS WITHIN YOUR FAMILIES AND WE HAVE TWELVE (12) VETERANS EARNING A DEGREE TODAY.

YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED THE REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY AND HAVE EARNED YOUR DEGREES – NO ONE IS GIVING YOU ANYTHING TODAY – NO “PARTICIPATION TROPHIES” HERE.

WHILE YOU ARE LIKELY 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?
- AM I READY TO APPLY THE LESSONS LEARNED YESTERDAY TO MY ENVIRONMENTS OF TOMORROW?
- IN SHORT ... *AM ... I ... READY?*”

YOUR WALSH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION HAS BEEN “ALL ABOUT” THIS VERY MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE ... MAKING YOU READY ... ENSURING YOU CAN CONFIDENTLY ANSWER THAT MONUMENTAL QUESTION.

WE HAVE TAUGHT YOU AN APPROACH TO EDUCATION THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT A SECULAR SCHOOL PROVIDES AND YET THE SAME AS HAS BEEN DONE FOR 937 YEARS IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION ... FOR 206 YEARS IN THE CHARISM OF EDUCATION WITH THE BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION ... AND FOR 65 YEARS IN WHAT IS NOW THE WALSH EXPERIENCE:

- 1. THAT FAITH AND REASON BOTH WILL LEAD YOU TO THE TRUTH
- 2. THAT THERE IS AN OBJECTIVE REALITY
- 3. THAT WE ARE TO UNCOVER AND DISCOVER THE TRUTH – NOT CREATE TRUTH

WE HAVE ALSO TAUGHT YOU THAT YOU HAVE A UNIQUE REASON TO BE ON EARTH ... JUST LIKE ALL THE REST OF US ... POINT YOUR INDEX FINGERS TO THE HEAVENS, EVERYONE ... YES, GRADUATES – YOU HAVE A PURPOSE AS UNIQUE AS YOUR FINGERPRINT ... YOU MUST NOW DECIDE HOW TO LEAVE YOUR MARK AND THAT YOU ARE EMPOWERED

- TO TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD
- FOR YOUR INTENDED PURPOSE
- AND WILL FIND TRUE JOY IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

JOY ... MUCH DEEPER THAN SIMPLY *HAPPINESS*.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, THE PATRON SAINT FOR STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES, HIS STATUE STANDS TALL ON OUR ACADEMIC QUAD, TELLS US JOY IS THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AND FINDING THIS JOY HINGES ON OUR FREE WILL ... OUR FREEDOM.

ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II, WRITING AN ENCYCLICAL IN DECEMBER 1990, REMINDED US THAT IN THE MISSION OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER, WHICH IS ENTRUSTED TO THE CHURCH, THAT “THE CHURCH ADDRESSES PEOPLE WITH FULL RESPECT FOR THEIR FREEDOM. HER MISSION DOES NOT RESTRICT FREEDOM BUT RATHER PROMOTES IT. THE CHURCH PROPOSES; SHE IMPOSES NOTHING. SHE RESPECTS INDIVIDUALS AND CULTURES, AND SHE HONORS THE SANCTUARY OF CONSCIENCE.”

THUS, CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN PROMINENT THROUGHOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT WALSH UNIVERSITY AS WE SOUGHT TO TEACH YOU “HOW” TO THINK ... NOT “WHAT” TO THINK ... WE, TOO, HAVE PROPOSED AND NOT IMPOSED.

FOR YOU SEE, EDUCATION IN THE 937-YEAR CATHOLIC TRADITION IS FOCUSED ON THE FORMATION OF MEN AND WOMEN OF CHARACTER.

THIS IS THE IMMEDIATE AND PROPER END OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION: TO MAKE HUMAN INDIVIDUALS CHRIST-LIKE.

“THE TRUE CHRISTIAN [WHO IS THE PRODUCT] OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION,” WRITES POPE PIUS XI, “IS THE SUPERNATURAL MAN WHO THINKS, JUDGES, AND ACTS CONSTANTLY AND CONSISTENTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH RIGHT REASON, ILLUMINATED BY THE SUPERNATURAL LIGHT OF THE EXAMPLE AND TEACHING OF CHRIST; HE WHO IS *THE TRUE AND FINISHED MAN OF CHARACTER*.”

YOUR FORMATION AS MEN AND WOMEN OF CHARACTER IS THE PRIMARY END OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION – YOUR WALSH EXPERIENCE. THE SECONDARY END IS THE FORMATION OF USEFUL CITIZENS.

FULTON SHEEN TAUGHT THAT THE WORLD OFFERS EACH OF US THREE WORDS THAT GUIDE OUR CHOICES: *PLEASE, MUST, AND OUGHT*.

- I CAN DO AS I PLEASE. OR ...
- I MUST ACT IN A MANNER THAT PLEASES ME. OR ...
- I OUGHT TO TAKE THIS PARTICULAR ACTION.

QUOTING THE EMMY-AWARD-WINNER AND VENERABLE ARCHBISHOP SHEEN,

“OF THESE THREE, WE MUST CHOOSE *OUGHT*.

THAT LITTLE WORD *OUGHT* SIGNIFIES THAT MAN IS FREE.

FIRE MUST BE HOT, ICE MUST BE COLD, BUT A MAN OUGHT TO BE GOOD.

OUGHT IMPLIES A MORAL POWER DISTINCT FROM A PHYSICAL POWER.

FREEDOM IS NOT THE POWER TO DO ANYTHING YOU PLEASE ... SO OFTEN EXPRESSED AND ACTED UPON IN TODAY'S EVER-EXPANDING PAGAN CULTURE.

YOU *CAN* ROB YOUR NEIGHBOR ... YOU *CAN* CHEAT ON YOUR TAXES ... BUT YOU *OUGHT* NOT TO DO THESE THINGS BECAUSE *OUGHT* IMPLIES MORALITY, DUTIES, AND OBLIGATIONS."

FOR YOU SEE, HE CONTINUES,

"THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN AFFIRMS YOU CANNOT HAVE ANY RIGHTS WITHOUT CORRESPONDING DUTIES.

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIFE, BUT I HAVE INSEPARABLY DUTY TO RESPECT THE LIFE OF OTHERS."

THIS BECOMES THE FOUNDATION OF AUTHENTIC SOCIAL REFORM ...
CONTRARY TO THE TWISTED LANGUAGE OF TODAY'S CULTURE WHERE
ALL THAT IS GOOD IS NOW PRESENTED AS EVIL, AND ALL THAT IS EVIL
HELD UP AS A PUBLIC GOOD.

THE AUTHENTIC SOCIAL REFORM CONCEPTS YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT,
HERE, TRACE THEIR ORIGINS BACK TO CATHOLIC DOCTRINE
THOUGHTFULLY LAID OUT BY LEO XIII IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY ...
AND WILL SEE THEIR FUTURE IN HOW EACH ONE OF YOU *OUGHT* TO LIVE
YOUR LIVES.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES YOU ASSUME TODAY ... AS ONE OF ONLY 7
PEOPLE OUT OF EVERY 100 IN THE WORLD TO ACHIEVE ANY LEVEL OF
HIGHER EDUCATION ... IS ENORMOUS AS YOU BECOME OUR FUTURE
LEADERS IN THE FAMILY, THE WORKPLACE, YOUR COMMUNITIES, AND
THROUGHOUT SOCIETY.

I URGE YOU ... TAKE YOUR FORMATION AND EDUCATION AND PLACE IT
IN SERVICE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THOSE AROUND YOU ... OF THOSE
ENTRUSTED TO YOU.

THIS IS WHAT YOU *OUGHT* TO DO!

IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE OF WHAT IS SAID TODAY, REMEMBER
THIS: YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS WILL BE MARKED NOT BY WHAT
YOU DO ... BUT BY WHAT YOU DO *FOR OTHERS*.

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.

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 IN SERVICE TO OTHERS ... YOU BECAME A LEADER IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

THIS JOURNEY TO YOUR COMMENCEMENT WAS DIFFICULT ... YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED MANY CHALLENGES AND PERSEVERED ... AND YOU HAVE LEARNED TO CHOOSE EACH TIME TO GET BACK UP AS WE DISCUSSED AT YOUR NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION.

YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN ALONE ... THROUGH YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS WE ARE ALL REMINDED 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

DRENDA AND I COME BEFORE YOU VERY, VERY PROUD OF EACH OF YOU ... FOR YOUR RESILIENCE, YOUR LEADERSHIP, AND THE CHARITY YOU EXTENDED TO OTHERS.

SUCCESS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS NEVER FINAL.

THE WORK AHEAD OF YOU AWAITS ... TODAY IS NOT AN END POINT BUT A TRANSITION POINT ... IT MARKS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN ANEW.

I URGE YOU ... 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 SO, YOU WILL NOW 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 ... YOUR CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY... LOOKS FORWARD TO ACCOMPANYING YOU AS YOUR PARTNER IN ***EDUCATION FOR LIFE.***

FINALLY, 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 SAFETY, WELL-BEING, AND IMPACT AS SERVANT LEADERS MODELING JESUS CHRIST IN ALL THAT YOU THINK AND DO.

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

WORDS UP!