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"The Last Inning"

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Commencement Comments to the Class of 2005

"The Last Inning"

Good afternoon. Welcome to Augustana College 's 145 th Annual Commencement. On behalf of the faculty, let me be the first to congratulate the Augustana College Class of 2005. We are proud of you and your achievements. We thank you for what you have added to Augustana College . Through your thoughtful comments in class, through the insights you demonstrate in your research, through your works of art and music, through your determination on the athletic field, through your passion for public service, and through your faithfulness and authenticity, we have all grown together. And on a personal note, I've had the opportunity to welcome many of you to the new presidential home , to attend your games and your performances or to visit with you informally at Java 101 or on the Quad. I am quite fond of this class, and while I rejoice with you in your accomplishments, I will miss you.

But by way of saying "Welcome" to all of us gathered here today - graduates, students, family and friends, colleagues, honored alumni - I would like to share the story of one of us here today.

Earlier this month, I had the good fortune to attend our baseball team's last home game of the regular season. It was Senior Day. As I was watching the game, a man came over and introduced himself as the father of one of the players. He expressed his appreciation for everything Augustana had done for his son, and then, he shared something with me that I found to be remarkable.

He told me his son's passion for baseball had started early - at the age of 3 or 4 - and since that time this parent estimated he had probably attended up to 1,000 games, cheering his son on at every one. It was a bittersweet day for that father - his days of watching his son playing baseball for competitive teams was probably at an end. But he was proud of the gifts competitive baseball had provided to his son. And proud of the way his son represented Augustana. But proud, also, that he was about ready to graduate from Augustana.

I know each parent here has a similar story - whether it be attending countless athletic events, music concerts, and other activities of your students, or the many, many times you simply lent a helping hand or shared words of encouragement.

Indeed, these are days in which we might see many endings. But as I thought about this parent's words and the poignant moment he shared with me, I realized that while cheering his son on as a baseball player might be coming to an end, this parent's days as a coach and cheerleader are far from over. I know - I am the father of a recent college graduate. Parents, as your students leave Augustana and make their way in life, they will still turn to you, more often than you might now think, and ask you to be their coach, their cheerleader and, increasingly, their friend. As time passes, you'll be rewarded because as you watch your children, you will see in them many of your own best traits, passed on in them.

Students, remember those who have served as your coaches, your cheerleaders, your advocates and your mentors. For most of you, first and foremost, these are your parents. But there are others. At Augustana

College , your faculty members have also been your coaches, cheerleaders, and advocates. Sometimes they have pushed you outside of your comfort zone. Importantly, they have helped you think about your calling in life. Often, they have also been your mentors. In my judgment, there is not a greater earthly privilege than to mentor another. I hope you will stay in touch with your faculty members - and continue to share your accomplishments, your joys and even your sorrows.

Parents and friends, thank you for entrusting us with your students' college education. Students, I speak for the faculty in offering our deepest thanks to you, our soon-to-be graduates, for the privilege of serving you. It is our honor to be your teachers and mentors.

So thank you all. And welcome to the commencement for the Augustana College Class of 2005!



Accounting	Communication Studies	Geography	Music	Pre-Optometry
Africana Studies	Computer Science	Geology	Music Education	Pre-Pharmacy
Anthropology	Creative Writing	German Studies	Music Performance	Pre-Physical Therapy
Art	Economics	Greek	Neuroscience	Pre-Physician Assistant
Art History	Elementary Education	Graphic Design	Non-Profit Leadership	Pre-Seminary
Asian Studies	Engineering	History	Development	Pre-Veterinary Medicine
Biochemistry	Engineering Physics	International Business	Philosophy	Psychology
Biology	English (Literature)	Japanese	Physics	Religion
Business Administration	English (Writing)	Landscape Architecture	Political Science	Scandinavian Studies
Chemistry	Environmental Management	Latin	Pre-Dentistry	Secondary Education
Chinese	& Forestry	Library and Information	Pre-Law	Sociology
Classics	Environmental Studies	Science	Pre-Medicine	Sociology (Social Welfare)
Communication Sciences	Ethics	Mathematics	Pre-Music Therapy	Spanish
& Disorders	French	Multimedia Journalism	Pre-Nursing	Theatre
		& Mass Communication	Pre-Occupational Therapy	Women's & Gender Studies