

~2022 SENIOR CLASS~

The formal, yet very joyous, the commencement ceremony for the 2022 senior class, MCA's fifth graduating class, was held on Saturday, May 28 in the upper school gym. With COVID protocols greatly reduced since the beginning of the pandemic three years ago, seniors were able to invite as many guests as they wanted. After the processional, senior Evan Key opened the program with the Pledge of Allegiance, the MCA Pledge, and the moment of silence. Seniors Jada Adams and Sophia Gomez delivered a hilarious "Last Will and Testament," followed by seniors Zeke Harrison and Tristan Shockley's quite enjoyable "Class Prophecy," imagining their classmates' twenty-five years into the future. "Come further up! Come further in!" a quote from C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia* framed the more serious addresses that followed. Rev. Dr. Chris Lawson, executive pastor of Reynolda Church in Winston-Salem, gave the keynote address. He was preceded by seniors Max Oakley and Hartley DeVore, whose speeches are reproduced below. Lower school director Lissa Carter presented senior Jeremiah Donaldson the Kirby R. McCrary Scholarship, which was followed by an enthusiastic standing ovation led by his senior classmates.



~ Commencement Address by Hartley DeVore ~

Well, guys, we made it. After four long years, we have finally finished high school. You all know me, but I will introduce myself to the crowd. My name is Hartley DeVore, and I am one of nineteen graduating today from Millennium Charter Academy.

I find it insane to think that I would have been standing up here today addressing you all by giving this speech, but here I am. When I was younger, I never really used to think of this day, I mean, I remember telling myself, "I can not wait to be able to drive," well that was over two years ago when that happened; how about, "I can't wait to be an adult," well I guess that happened to most of us. But in all seriousness, I can not believe that today has finally come and that it has come so soon. It feels like yesterday, walking through the high school hallway for the first time as a ninth grader back in 2018 when the most significant concern on our minds was the African map test. Thanks for that, Mrs. Kiefer. Or what about in tenth grade when we had the heated Celsius vs. Fahrenheit debate? Good job on that, Cal. Then there was our junior year, with the weekly American history tests and Mr. Darcy's relationship in *Pride and Prejudice*. Then, of course, there was twelfth grade when we learned about Huckleberry Finn and Calculus and performed "The Merchant of Venice." These are only a few experiences I am sure we will all remember from our time in high school here at MCA.

But these memories carry with them a heavyweight because today marks the end. All of time spent in these halls, with these teachers, and with each other, yet that all is coming to an end today. But this end is not one to dread because this ending brings about the beginning of the rest of our lives.



Hartley DeVore



Today I have been asked to speak on the quote from C.S Lewis. Reading “Come further up, come further in!” A relatively simple quote from C.S Lewis yet it carries with it an extremely deep meaning. This quote is from his novel *The Last Battle*, the book which concluded the old Narnia series and left a chance for a whole new adventure. This novel marks the end of a series, full of life-changing experiences for the characters in the novels. It is full of action, sadness, joy, stress, and adventure. These experiences that the characters had all came to an end in this novel. Experiences, endings, and new beginnings,... some meaningful words especially today.

Being here at Millennium Charter Academy since kindergarten, I have been able to experience many absolutely amazing things. I was able to play baseball for the school team back in middle school and throughout high school, something which I never thought I would be able to do past little league. I am able to walk the same hallways where I spent my elementary school years learning and growing and seeing countless young students experiencing this same growth. I have been able to play in the MCA band for seven years growing my love of music and sharing this music with others. And these meaningful experiences are only a few of my own and I am certain that you all have had countless meaningful experiences here as well. But I believe that the most important experience we all share from our time here is being encouraged to be virtuous individuals.

Here at MCA, we have the habits and expectations, you know those green and gold posters hanging in every room. These posters are placed in every classroom to serve as a constant reminder of the virtues we are meant to have as students of Millennium Charter Academy. The gold poster states that as students we must have the habits of obedience, courtesy, truthfulness, integrity, service, awareness, thinking, excellence, perseverance, and leading. Then the green poster states that as MCA students we are expected to be respectful of ourselves, others, and proper authority, to be honest with ourselves and with others, to be compassionate toward people and humane towards other living things, to be responsible personally, privately, and publicly, and to be courageous by doing the right thing even when it is difficult or unpopular. These habits and expectations are taught and implemented inside of the school, and it is our responsibility to obey them in or out of school. Following these habits and expectations by being virtuous can not end as our time here at this school is ending. We must continue to carry these traits throughout the rest of our lives.

Now going back to Narnia, although the series concludes it does not simply end with the characters’ experiences and adventures going to waste. As a matter of fact, it ends with opportunity, the characters begin a completely new adventure by passing through and listening to the call to Come further up and Come further in. And although they have reached the end, to quote the novel, “for them it was only the beginning of the real story.” Today we shall listen to this same call to come further up and come further in, by leaving here with our lessons, knowledge, and experiences to begin our next stage of life.

Although our time here has also come to an end, I believe that our class, the class of 2022, certainly carried with it a good reputation here at Millennium Charter Academy. I consider each and every one of you to be my dear friend, and from me, I would like to congratulate you all for your hard work, dedication to this school, and love for each other. Throughout our time together, I believe that we have become a family. A family which truly builds each other up. I ask that each of you all continue to work hard, continue to live, laugh, and learn as you have done here, continue to experience great things no matter where life takes you, and continue to be virtuous individuals as this school has taught you to be, and I can not wait to see how much “further up” we will all continue to go. I will miss this school, I will miss my friends in other grades, and I will miss you all. The only thing left to say is thank you MCA for all you have done for our class, thank you to the teachers and staff who have allowed us to reach this point, and congratulations to Millennium Charter Academy’s class of 2022!



Keynote Speaker
Rev. Dr. Chris Lawson



National Honor Society Members:
Max Oakley, Calvin DeVore, and
Hartley DeVore



Tristan Shockley and
Charlie Cockerham



~ Commencement Address by Max Oakley ~



Max Oakley

For this speech I have been asked to tackle the meaning of the quote “Further up and further in” by C. S. Lewis. This quote within the books of Narnia represents the end of the old, and the beginning of something else. There is a long running documentary series in the UK called “Up,” as in 7-Up 14-Up, 21-Up, etc. At this point, the series has been filming for almost sixty years. It started in 1964 with fourteen kids, all of whom were seven years old. Each were in different socioeconomic group and from different locations in the UK. They have been interviewed every seven years since that debut. As we watch these children rapidly grow into adults, even the technology grows with them as we go from black and white to HD cameras. More than watching the technology, watching the children grow is what impresses. Watching an interview cut from the participants being seven years old to twenty-one to forty-two is like a magic trick. No special effects will ever come close. If you watch the documentary in a few sittings, it seems almost impossible. This kid, who was just seven is now married. Then I blink, and their kids are moving out. It feels so fast, and I often felt like I was watching a different person entirely, like a lifetime was lived between age fourteen and twenty-one. The interviewer even asks them how they have or haven't changed and it's often a struggled response. Should they have stayed the same? Is there an inconsistency or a lack of authenticity? Should they have changed more? I don't think the fact that these people changed is surprising to many. They moved “further up and further in” to their lives. As much as we will always be our parents' children, we move further from childhood every day. The subjects of “Up” may not identify with their younger selves the old they get, yet the documentary will probably form a more complete idea of who these people are then they themselves will recall. They moved on to new chapters in their lives. They moved “further up and further in.”



Landon Jarrell

There is another video online called “Age 12 to Married – I Took A Photo Every Day,” which some of you have probably seen since it has 224 million views. It is not the video itself that interests me but the idea around it. What if someone had taken a video of your life, but they could only record one second a day? Could a single second a day encapsulate your life? A person could discern from the video who your family is, your interests at different times in your life, where you have lived, the company you have kept. Yet it could not tell you much beyond that.

You all have memories, ones you think back on often in nostalgia or a simple remembrance. A vacation you'll never forget, the day you were married, the birth of a child. Those memories would be gone in a few seconds. If you lived to eighty your entire life would be a little more than eight hours long. If people were to watch this video, they could miss your happiest moments or your most defining memories in just a blink. One of my fondest memories was driving through the Joshua tree forest in California. Joshua trees are these tall palms that only grow in the deserts of the southwestern United States. I was driving past these rare trees that only grow in a desert in California, and it was snowing. It was a rare site to see. The only way I can think to describe it is “the beauty of a contradiction.” That memory would be gone in one second, and I could have simply missed it if I weren't paying attention. To move “further up and further in” to our lives does not mean forgetting the experiences we had.



Kendall Gause

I have been at this school for thirteen years. For me to walk from the atrium to the elementary school hallway is like walking backwards in time. If you were to wait in the atrium, you would be sitting where I have eaten lunch every day for the past four years. If you walked up the ramps, you would be standing where I was when we were discussing whether that same atrium was going to be built at all. Walk just past that hallway and you would see the library, which used to be the lunchroom where I ate from fourth – sixth grade, eating the same kind of Chef Boyardee so many times my mom is probably still recognized at the grocery store for buying twenty cans at a time. A few more steps down and you'll see the art show cases where a seven-year-old-me wanted a blue ribbon for his own artwork... finally achieving that just two weeks ago.



Donnie Kipple

You keep walking and you pass the rooms where I spent years learning, the rooms for every book fair I visited, the gym where I tried rollerblading for the first time, the computer room that had every flash game I could imagine on it, and where I cheated on my multiplication tables. Yes, I am sorry mom. The certificates I gave you when I was nine were built on lies. You would even find where Mrs. Brown, who retired this year, still remembers me touring the school, skipping down the hall almost fourteen years ago. Then, at the end of the school you would find where I made my first real friends, most of them have left, but some I have the honor of graduating with today.

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Jada Adams

I would be remiss not to tell you it will be hard. My father was diagnosed with cancer early this year. It was stressful for the family, to say the least. My mother had to go through all the preparation for the surgery. They told my father his recovery could take months. They said he might have to take radiation and go on chemo. It wasn't an easy experience by any means, but it was mine. He had surgery on his throat two months ago. He was declared cancer free around one month ago. I'm proud of you dad.

The quote "further up and further in" within the context of the book signifies the characters reaching the end of their adventure and realizing there is so much more. To my fellow students: like the subjects of "Up," none of us will be the same in seven years. Our environments, friend groups, problems, and passions will likely all be different. We will all change. Life can be hard, and at times it can be cruel. I ask you to cherish every second regardless. We have all spent some of our seconds here in these halls. We have spent them playing the same football game at recess every day. We spent them trading study guides for the next test. We spent them collectively groaning as Dr. Roberson, with an unwavering smile, assigned another essay before we had even finished the first one. I somehow cherish those seconds, too. As we move "further up and further in" to our ever-changing lives, we will never quite be the same as we are now. I urge you all not to let even a second go by. Value every second with your military haircuts, your annoying college roommates, and the friends you will make in your ever-expanding futures. It's time for us to walk through these halls and reminisce one final time. Thank you, MCA, for my education, for some of my most important people, for the precious seconds. Thank you and goodbye.



Mark Snyder, Jeremiah Donaldson

