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Character Scholarship Community



Welcome to our fifty-first edition of "The Academic Journal," a bimonthly bulletin in which you can read about MCA's educational philosophy, instructional methodology, and the various viewpoints and positions of our faculty, staff, students, and families.

COMMENCEMENT 2019

With great pride it is our pleasure to present to you the student speeches, slightly abbreviated due to space, delivered at the recent 2019 commencement ceremony.

BY MISS EMILY ROBERTSON

There is a three word phrase that every Millennium high school student should know and be very familiar with by now, but while it is important, I am not talking about the phrase that I am sure just popped into your minds. The phrase I mean is "Never Give Up." For us to be here today, it means that we made it through this year, and all of the last thirteen years of schooling. For some of us, it has been thirteen years at Millennium, and for others it has been multiple schools before with as little as two years at Millennium. But for everyone of us, we chose to take the harder road; we chose to work hard and never give up. Millennium is more of a challenge than most people, both in general and of our age, would choose to take on. So many people have chosen to just take the easy path, but not us. Because we are about to walk across this stage today, we can say that we did not give up. We chose to persevere and learn to become virtuous members of society.



I have loved this school, the things I have gotten to learn, the people I have met, and I have never regretted my decision to stay here, but attending Millennium has been a huge struggle. One that almost seemed impossible at times. However, in the back of my mind, I have always known that what I learned would eventually be a great help to me in the future. We have future doctors, teachers, engineers, artists, and so much more sitting here today. These future doctors are going to have a greater appreciation for the lives that they hold in their hands. These teachers will impart the character habits and virtues that we have learned in the children of the future. These artists will have the understanding of humanity that is necessary to portray truth in a beautiful way. The things that we have learned and are going to give to the world are vital to the survival of democracy and this nation in a time where so many people do not care and spread vice instead of virtue.

Whether it was the critical thinking, research, and writing skills, or the knowledge and virtues that have been imparted in me, the things that I have learned at Millennium are going to help me, help each and every one of us, greatly in the future. Even Capstone, for all that we have complained and hated the class, is going to help us in the future. We have learned to take a stand, argue our case, and defend our argument. And we have learned to do it all while thinking and writing and speaking well. I most certainly would not have been standing here speaking in front of all of you, even ten years ago, without Millennium, and my amazing teachers.

BY MR. JACOB HIATT

I have been asked to center my speech around a quote from Os Guinness, an intellectual and critic of modern society. In his work *Last Call for Liberty*, he wrote the following: "Leadership without character, business without ethics, and science without human values---in short, freedom without virtue---will bring the republic to its knees." I would like to first discuss its meaning, give a story of how freedom without virtue is harmful, and then answer the question of why this idea is relevant to our lives.

Contained within this quote is a notion that we may not have previously considered. Humans are multifaceted creatures. We can be good, but we can show evil greater than any other living being. Many people lead without good character or integrity, many run businesses only for profit and trample others for their benefit, and many research so that others may use it for nefarious purposes. We are free to do this, just the same as we are free to make decisions that harm us or others. However, if we act thinking that our actions have no consequences---if we act believing we can do whatever we want---our world will not survive. Our world will be no different than what I asked you all to imagine earlier. Freedom without virtue leads humanity down a dark road; one that may end with our republic in irreparable shards. Virtue is an important structure that lifts humanity to a higher plane. Freedom without virtue can be dangerous.

A recent incident in the medical field illustrates this point. In 2017, there was a major scandal involving the makers of EpiPens. Between 2009 and 2016, the price of a single EpiPen rose from \$103 to \$608. This was nearly a 500% increase. The manufacturing company Pfizer and its CEO took no blame, instead shifting it on to middle men and claiming the price increase was justified. This is most certainly an instance of business without ethics. How would this affect people? EpiPens are a life-saving medicine. Over three million people a year in America receive a prescription for the medication. Say you are a patient, in immediate need of an EpiPen due to an allergic reaction, and have no health insurance. You are forced to pay an exorbitant amount for a medication that does not cost even 10% of its price to make. If the price could not be covered, a person's life could be lost. My dad has allergic reactions that may require an epinephrine injection. The last thing I want to see is him suffer irreversible injury because someone acted without virtue.

Now, I am sure many of you may be asking the same question at this point. How does this involve me? How is this related to us? Well, I believe the better question is "How isn't this related to us?" We all must strive to be good people: to embody virtue in our actions. It does not matter if you want to be a teacher like Emily, a librarian like Sydney, a radiologist like Abbi, or anything else. However, do not confuse being virtuous and being a good person with being a perfect person. No one is perfect. We can not live lives in which we show no sin whatsoever and do everything absolutely correctly. Instead, the lives we can live are ones where we consider other's feelings, where we help those in need, and where we make actions that are morally right. If we can all be people who act this way, our world can be something truly special. This is how and why you are involved. To help make the world better, we can all work to be virtuous.

All of us here at Millennium are already one-step closer to this. I believe that Millennium has not only prepared us academically for higher education or careers, but it has prepared us to be good people. Those habits and expectations on the wall in every classroom have a purpose. Their purpose to teach us what our true potential as humans can be. Our teachers believe we can be something great, and I believe that each and every person graduating today can make a positive impact on the world. If you leave here remembering one thing from my speech, let it be this: we can strengthen our republic by being virtuous. No matter what you do, find virtue in your everyday lives, proudly show it, and help make the world an incredible place for everyone living on it.

