

Commencement Remarks

May 26, 2023

Henry D. Fairfax

Great day fellow humans! Welcome home! What a good-looking crowd we have with us here today-especially our SENIORS!!!! You all look awesome.

A warm and hearty CA welcome to our families and friends who traveled near and far to be with us today for this special occasion. Another welcome and thank you to all CA staffulty, trustees, and our alumnae/i community.

Fay, thank you for your remarks this morning and for all of your transformational leadership and guidance of CA over the years. You have been an inspiration for all of us and I don't expect that to change any time soon.

Seniors, the countdown is no longer in days as you reminded us at announcements in the PAC over the last few months. In less than an hour you will inch ever so closely toward a new kind of independence but as you have heard me say a few times this year—run, don't hurry! These next few years are about CAREFUL exploration and risk-taking. As a parent of a 19 (Bryce) and 21-year-old (Brooklyn), I am qualified to give that advice and hopefully you will listen to me more than my son and daughter. Just kidding—they ALWAYS listen to me!

Can I ask every parent, grandparent or guardian who would like to, please stand or raise a hand with us, and be recognized. If you all don't already know this, you are superheroes in this movie where your children are the main characters.

Seniors, your superheroes will continue to serve you beyond your time at CA. The simple truth is that you are stuck with all of us—for life, and that's a great thing because we really love you. As I recall, the college years require a lot of dependence in the areas of food, money, and laundry.

Based on several visits back to campus for an untold number of alums, I anticipate and hope that you will return to CA early and often. Remember, CA will always be home. When you return, you will visit with former advisors, teachers, coaches, and other Staffulty who will welcome you with warm arms and curiosity about your journey. Be ready to share, we can't wait to listen and guide where necessary. I predict that time away will likely remind you all of the special connections shared between the adults and students in the CA community. You have been guided by a staffulty who have walked beside you on your learning journey every step of the way. Please join me in honoring CA's faculty and staff.

Some, but not all of you may know that we have some-super special and unique traditions at CA like the senior song you just witnessed. Another tradition is that our commencement does not include any awards, prizes, or diplomas with distinction—over 70 years ago Headmistress Josephine Tucker did away with awards in deference to our shared love of learning and focus on the process and transformation over the product and transaction of school. This tradition allows us to honor each student and is one of the many admirable qualities at CA.

Of course, some ceremonial traditions persist—this morning, truly special speakers will share words of wisdom with our seniors and then we will present each one with a Concord Academy diploma.

Seniors, it was an honor to stand in the back of the Chapel or outside to listen to your words over the course of the year. I am confident that you have been blessed with some of the best educators in the world, and it is also true that we have been blessed to have some of the most thoughtful and passionate students anywhere. Every chapel talk, your words inspired us to reflect, be vulnerable, persistent, funny, and humble. The challenges presented by the last four years are well documented, but your resilience in times of adversity will set you apart in the years to come. Remember: Diamonds are cultivated under intense pressure and they take time to form, but in the end, they shine in the brightest of lights. In a few minutes, you will join 6,126 diamonds (or CA alumnae/i) shining their light in the world by making an impact in their community and for the people they serve. We are forever grateful for all you did to impact CA during your time and we are overjoyed to honor you today

I would now like to invite this year's student head of school to come forward to share some remarks with you to celebrate his peers, the Concord Academy Class of 2023 Please welcome Jay Talwar.