

Commencement

Introduction to Commencement Speaker

May 26, 2023

Svava Valfells '23

Thank you, Henry, and good morning, everyone.

Today, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to introduce to you our 2023 Commencement speaker. Our speaker today is one who strives for equity, affinity, and inclusion. He is an activist who has committed his career to “building an army of change agents.” Someone who advocates for a more just world, a world we want to live in. Today, we will hear from André Robert Lee. Lee is an award-winning filmmaker, keynote speaker, consultant, writer, and educator. Films he has directed and/or produced include:

- The documentary *I'm Not Racist ... Am I?*
- An award-winning short film series for Paramount TV called *Virtually Free* which tells the story of incarcerated youth in Richmond, Virginia
- And *The Road to Justice*, which documents the civil rights tours he led throughout the American South for more than 15 years.

Lee is a storyteller. He has directed the short documentary *Firsthand: Realizing Your Full Potential Through STEM*, as well as directed and produced the television series *This is Life with Lisa Ling* for CNN. He is currently developing a documentary series on mental health programs within the California Department of Education. His projects are dynamic, far-reaching, and impactful.

Lee's impact extends all across the United States. He has collaborated with the New York City Public Schools, the Ford Foundation, Diana Ross, and the media organizations Miramax Films, BET, Universal, PBS, HBO, Sundance, Picturehouse, and Dreamworks.

Through *purposeful collaboration and creative engagement* Lee's work both *challenges and expands our understanding of ourselves and the world.*

He studied history at Connecticut College and education at Tufts. Lee teaches filmmaking at the Germantown Friends School and has also served as a professor of writing at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. He sits on the Board of Directors at The Miquon School and is the namesake of the André Robert Lee Fellowship, which is dedicated to providing financial grants, mentorship, and leadership opportunities.

André Robert Lee serves as an incredibly inspiring role model and could not be more aligned with Concord Academy's mission statement. He "cultivates empathy, integrity, and responsibility to build a more just and sustainable future". We are lucky to have him here with us today. Please join me in welcoming André Robert Lee to Concord Academy.