

Song Precious Lord Take My Hand

This was one of my mom's favorite songs. She would often sing it around the house and wherever else she was invited to perform. She had a highly sought after voice in Columbus County, NC and the most important characteristic that I learned from her was respect. She told me wherever I go and whatever I do make sure you are respectful and you will go far in life. Mom I've tried real hard and I miss you and love you very much. I would like to take this time to thank all our parents and loved ones right now for doing such a great job of raising such an outstanding class.

I imagine that some of us had to get down on our knees in the early hours of the day and ask the Precious Lord to guide us before tests and exams. Dr. Herr's history courses, Dr. McConnell's choir performances, and Bill Caudill's pipe band gigs made me invest in some comfortable knee pads.

We truly are a wonderful class of students graduating from St. Andrews this year. I want you to reflect on the past four years for just a little bit. The first roommate you had freshman year who you just couldn't get along with, four years of SAGA (I will personally miss Fried Chicken Wednesday s), the craziest parties, and Ganza. Some of us fell in love with our professors hanging on every word they spoke in class, while some students were so in love they closed their eyes and daydreamed about them during lectures. We used our God-given talents while we were here at St. Andrews. Some of us participated in athletics and represented St. Andrews very well on the fields and on the courts. Some of us used our voices to sing in the choir and some of us used our musicianship to perform across the country in the St. Andrews Pipe Band. Many of us spent long hours at the barns attending to horses in the Equestrian and Western Riding programs.

While we had good times we also had a few unfortunate times as well. We experienced death on our campus a few times but we should hold our heads up and be proud of the life lived by our deceased. What I thought was a true demonstration of the heart of SAPC is how we dealt with our tragedies. We forgot about arguments and ourselves really and embraced each other in our arms and cried on each others shoulders, we were a community. We are a community.

We are an exceptional class but we are leaving SAPC and going into an exceptional world. A world that I feel our St. Andrews degree has equipped us to take over. What is your degree? If your degree is a ticket to a job, then it will fail. If your degree is a way to graduate school, it will fail. If your degree means I will earn a lot of money, it will fail. Your degree should mean that the liberal arts education you received at SAPC is just the beginning of a life of critical thinking and problem solving because we are entering a world of extreme poverty, of global issues that threaten our environment and various cultures, and economic devastation. To be quite frank, a United States government that has not done a great job of representing Americans and Americans collectively are to blame. What does it mean to be an American, here or Abroad? What kind of citizens will we become, as we leave Meck, Winston, Pate, and Orange? How will we discipline ourselves without Deans Marti Newbold and Lewis Stroud. Where are Will, Erin, and Jen to plan our recreational activities? Where is Rev. Jim Ewing to minister to us? Where is Ritchey to give us new keys when we loose the old set?

These questions may not be immediately on our minds but as you leave St. Andrews and migrate into your future neighborhoods and communities, I pray you think about what

you have learned at St. Andrews that makes you different from other graduates from across the country. I pray that you use your knowledge to lead your communities by proper and thoughtful decision making. Even though we all may not know exactly what to do with our lives, do not settle for just another job, rather consider a career that allows you to use your gifts. The gift you will bring to the world is through your calling. What you feel passionate about, what do you feel you can't let a single day go by without doing this? I can't let a single day go by without singing. No matter how bad I feel, no matter what grade Dr. Dickey gave me in Quest, I could not stop singing. I enjoy learning about the past and how you can learn from the past in order to problem solve in the future. That's why I chose history or rather history chose me. In the crowd, I see volunteers, attorneys, ministers, teachers, professors, medical doctors, and even parents. Whatever you become, you will always be a part of the St. Andrews community. You will always remember the bonds of friendship you have made here at SAPC, with classmates, professors, the staff, and even some of the townies. I was thinking to myself one day, you know we are going to have children one day and they are going to ask us about our college experience. I hope you tell them with joy of the wonderful experiences here at this beautiful place in Laurinburg, NC, that surrounds Lake Ansley, St. Andrews.

May God Bless You All