

I would like to begin the farewell address with a popular quote by Isabel Waxman. “It is indeed ironic that we spend our school days yearning to graduate and our remaining days nostalgic about our school days.”

This quote has meant a great deal to me in the past few weeks. The last four years have flown by and I still remember how nervous I was when my family and I drove to Buffalo for the first time to drop me off. I remember sitting in the car thinking, “Am I really going to college? Will I be able to handle living away from my home, my family, and all the things I have grown to become familiar with?” As I thought about these things I realized that regardless of how nervous or uncomfortable I felt, it was important for me to make the best of the situation.

While the transition from high school to college was a difficult one (I would have to share a bathroom with how many girls?), there was one thing that made everything seem better: the friends that I made. In addition to the diploma, it is the people and the memories made over the past few years that I will keep with me forever. Whether it be studying in the library till all hours of the night, commiserating over a tough course load, or celebrating the end of a semester, the events of the past four years have helped shape us into the people that we are today.

I would like to end this address with a quick story that sums up what we are celebrating today.

There was a woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things "in order", she contacted her pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes. She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be

buried in. The woman also requested to be buried with her favorite Bible. Everything was in order and the pastor was preparing to leave when the woman suddenly remembered something very important to her. "There's one more thing," she said, "I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand. The pastor stood looking at the woman, not knowing quite what to say. The woman explained. "In all my years of attending various social events and potluck dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork'. It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming...like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance! So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder "What's with the fork?'. Then I want you to tell them: Keep your fork....the best is yet to come".

It is with great pride that I stand in front of you today, as a fellow classmate and as a friend. Thank you for the times we have shared and the memories that we have made.

Please join me in raising your forks. It has been a wonderful college experience, and let's remember that the best is yet to come.

Congratulations to the Class of 2004. May our paths meet again someday.