

2026 Commencement Script

Cecchini Alumni Arena

DR. TIM COLLINS REMARKS: (2 May 2026)

SWORDS UP! SWORDS UP!

WELCOME CAV NATION!

WELCOME FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS OF CAV NATION TO YOUR CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY. WE ARE HONORED WITH YOUR PRESENCE TODAY FOR THIS MOST SIGNIFICANT MOMENT IN THE LIVES OF THESE [STRETCH OUT ARMS] SOON-TO-BE NEWEST GRADUATES OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION!

SWORDS UP x 2!

THE SUCCESS OF WALSH UNIVERSITY IS REFLECTED IN THE LIVES OF OUR GRADUATES ... OUR ALUMNI.

WE HAVE SOME OF OUR ALUMNI WITH US TODAY FOR THIS SPECIAL OCCASION. WILL THE ALUMNI OF WALSH COLLEGE/WALSH UNIVERSITY PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED AS WE WELCOME YOU HOME!

THE GRANDCHILDREN AND CHILDREN OF OUR ALUMNI ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS OUR LEGACY ALUM. CLASS OF 2026, IF YOU ARE THE DAUGHTER OR SON, GRANDDAUGHTER OR GRANDSON OF A WALSH ALUM WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED?

FIRST RESPONDERS AND OUR MILITARY (ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE, RETIRED, OR VETS) ... THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO US! PLEASE STAND AND BE APPRECIATED.

FOR ALL OF THOSE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE ... IN CONSECRATED LIFE ... WHO PRAY FOR US AND FOR OUR MISSION AND FOR OUR STUDENTS EVERYDAY – WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR THAT! PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED.

A SHOUT OUT TO OUR CAMPUS POLICE WHOSE ACTIVE PRESENCE CONTRIBUTES IN SO MANY WAYS TO OUR SAFE CAMPUS TODAY AND ALWAYS ... YOU HONOR US!

A SHOUT OUT TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE THIS WEEKEND POSSIBLE – FACULTY, STAFF, COACHES, COMMERCIAL VENDORS, AND PARTNERS ... AND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE QUIETLY AND DILIGENTLY “BEHIND THE SCENES” PREPARED OUR CAMPUS AND ALL OUR FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO US TODAY.

NEARLY SEVEN DECADES AGO, THE BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION STOOD ON THIS VERY GROUND AND IMAGINED A CATHOLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTED TO STUDENTS WHO WOULD WORK AND LEARN TOGETHER SO AS TO EVENTUALLY HEED THE EDIT OF BROTHER FRANCIS BLOUIN:

“YOU MUST MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

THEIR CATHOLIC FAITH GUIDED THEM ... AND IT CONTINUES TO GUIDE YOUR INSTITUTION TODAY.

THIS YEAR'S 588 GRADUATES ARE A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS REFLECTIVE OF GOD'S PLAN AND THE WORLD HE CREATED AROUND US.

YOU HAVE COME TO US FROM AS NEAR AS NORTH CANTON AND AS FAR AWAY AS ETHIOPIA AND NORTHERN IRELAND. YOU REPRESENT 14 COUNTRIES AND 26 STATES. YOU ARE EARNING DEGREES IN 67 MAJORS. 113 OF YOU ARE SCHOLAR-ATHLETES.

15 OF YOU ARE THE CHILDREN OF OUR ALUMNI CONTINUING WALSH UNIVERSITY TRADITIONS WITHIN YOUR FAMILIES AND WE HAVE 3 VETERANS EARNING A DEGREE TODAY.

YOU HAVE NOW COMPLETED THE REQUIREMENTS NECESSARY AND HAVE EARNED YOUR DEGREES – NO ONE IS GIVING YOU ANYTHING TODAY – NO “PARTICIPATION TROPHIES” HERE.

YOUR WALSH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION HAS BEEN “BUILT” FOR THIS VERY MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE ... MAKING YOU READY FOR YOUR NEXT DESTINATION, YOUR LIFE, AND YOUR LIFE'S PURPOSE.

WE HAVE PREPARED YOU WITH AN APPROACH TO EDUCATION THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT A SECULAR SCHOOL PROVIDES AND YET THE SAME AS HAS BEEN DONE FOR 938 YEARS IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION ... FOR 207 YEARS IN THE CHARISM OF EDUCATION WITH THE BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION ... AND FOR 65 YEARS IN WHAT IS NOW THE

WALSH EXPERIENCE:

- #1. THAT FAITH AND REASON BOTH WILL LEAD YOU TO THE TRUTH
- #2. THAT THERE IS AN OBJECTIVE REALITY
- #3. THAT WE ARE TO UNCOVER AND DISCOVER THE TRUTH – NOT CREATE TRUTH

WE HAVE ALSO TAUGHT YOU THAT YOU HAVE A UNIQUE REASON TO BE ON EARTH ... JUST LIKE ALL THE REST OF US IN THE ARENA ... POINT YOUR INDEX FINGERS TO THE HEAVENS, EVERYONE ... YES, GRADUATES – YOU HAVE A PURPOSE AS UNIQUE AS YOUR FINGERPRINT ... YOU MUST NOW DECIDE HOW TO LEAVE YOUR MARK

- AND #4 – THAT YOU ARE EMPOWERED ...
 - TO TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD
 - FOR YOUR INTENDED PURPOSE
 - AND TO FIND TRUE JOY IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

JOY ... MUCH DEEPER THAN SIMPLY *HAPPINESS*.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, THE PATRON SAINT FOR STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES, HIS STATUE STANDS TALL ON OUR ACADEMIC QUAD, TELLS US JOY IS THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AND FINDING THIS JOY HINGES ON OUR FREE WILL ... OUR FREEDOM.

ST POPE JOHN PAUL II, WRITING AN ENCYCLICAL IN DECEMBER 1990, REMINDED US THAT IN THE MISSION OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER, WHICH IS ENTRUSTED TO THE CHURCH, THAT “THE CHURCH ADDRESSES PEOPLE WITH FULL RESPECT FOR THEIR FREEDOM. HER MISSION DOES NOT RESTRICT FREEDOM BUT RATHER PROMOTES IT. THE CHURCH PROPOSES;

SHE IMPOSES NOTHING. SHE RESPECTS INDIVIDUALS AND CULTURES, AND SHE HONORS THE SANCTUARY OF CONSCIENCE.”

THUS, CHRISTIANITY HAS BEEN PROMINENT THROUGHOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT WALSH UNIVERSITY AS WE SOUGHT TO TEACH YOU “HOW” TO THINK ... NOT “WHAT” TO THINK ... WE, TOO, HAVE PROPOSED AND NOT IMPOSED.

FOR YOU SEE, EDUCATION IN THE 938-YEAR CATHOLIC TRADITION IS FOCUSED ON THE FORMATION OF MEN AND WOMEN OF CHARACTER.

THIS IS THE IMMEDIATE AND PROPER END OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

- TO MAKE HUMAN INDIVIDUALS CHRIST-LIKE.

“THE TRUE CHRISTIAN [WHO IS THE PRODUCT] OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION,” WRITES POPE PIUS XI, “IS THE SUPERNATURAL MAN WHO THINKS, JUDGES, AND ACTS CONSTANTLY AND CONSISTENTLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH RIGHT REASON, ILLUMINATED BY THE SUPERNATURAL LIGHT OF THE EXAMPLE AND TEACHING OF CHRIST; HE WHO IS *THE TRUE AND FINISHED MAN OF CHARACTER*.”

YOUR FORMATION AS MEN AND WOMEN OF CHARACTER IS THE PRIMARY END OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION – YOUR WALSH EXPERIENCE. THE SECONDARY END IS THE FORMATION OF USEFUL CITIZENS.

AS SUCH, LET ME REFRAME YOUR FUTURE RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW:

- YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS WILL FOREVER BE MARKED
 - NOT BY WHAT YOU DO ...
 - BUT BY WHAT YOU DO ***FOR OTHERS***.

THIS JOURNEY TO YOUR COMMENCEMENT WAS DIFFICULT ... YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED MANY CHALLENGES AND PERSEVERED ... AND YOU HAVE LEARNED TO CHOOSE EACH TIME TO GET BACK UP AS I OFFERED TO YOU AT YOUR NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION – WHICH DOESN'T SEEM THAT LONG AGO, DOES IT?

YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN ALONE ... THROUGH YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS WE ARE ALL REMINDED THAT ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – AND A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.

IF THERE IS A SINGLE LESSON THAT SUMS ALL OF THIS UP – I DARE SAY IT IS THIS TRUTH:

- LIFE IS DIFFICULT AND REQUIRES SACRIFICE

THE WORK AHEAD OF YOU AWAITS ... TODAY IS NOT AN END POINT BUT A TRANSITION POINT ... IT MARKS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BEGIN ANEW.

SUCCESS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IS NEVER FINAL.

BUT BEFORE YOU GO ... KNOW THAT DRENDA AND ME COME BEFORE YOU VERY, VERY PROUD OF EACH OF YOU ... FOR YOUR RESILIENCE, YOUR LEADERSHIP, AND THE CHARITY YOU EXTENDED TO OTHERS.

IT IS OUR HOPE THAT YOU WILL EMBRACE OPPORTUNITIES THAT COME BEFORE YOU AS YOU TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD WITH *CONFIDENCE*, WITH *GRACE*, WITH *HUMILITY* ... ALWAYS MEETING OTHERS WITH CHARITY AND KINDNESS ... SPEAKING THAT LANGUAGE THAT ...

- THE DEAF CAN HEAR
- AND THE BLIND CAN SEE

IT HAS BEEN OUR PRIVILEGE TO HAVE BEEN PART OF YOUR JOURNEY,
AND WALSH UNIVERSITY ... YOUR CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY... LOOKS
FORWARD TO ACCOMPANYING YOU AS YOUR PARTNER IN ***EDUCATION
FOR LIFE.***

FINALLY, WE PLACE INTO THE HANDS OF THE FIRST LADY OF WALSH
UNIVERSITY – OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP – OUR PRAYERS FOR HER
INTERCESSIONS

- FOR YOUR CONTINUED *SAFETY, WELL-BEING,* AND **IMPACT** AS
SERVANT LEADERS MODELING JESUS CHRIST IN ALL THAT YOU
THINK, SAY, AND DO.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

GOD BLESS WALSH UNIVERSITY.

AND GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

SWORDS UP!