

I would like to begin by thanking the senior class for choosing me to be your speaker. This holds particular significance for me since some of you and I began our careers at Trinity at the same time. There are several of you who have had me as a teacher for three out of the five years you have been here, in different classes of course. Others of you have had that privilege for only two years. And when I think back to the first day of that eighth grade geography class almost five years ago, I believe you and I both have come a long way since then. And while I, hopefully, if this speech goes well, will be returning to Trinity next year, you will be moving on to other things. I will never forget this class, and, in most cases, I will miss you very much.

Now, I just have a few things to go over today, and then we can play the game. As you know, sometimes we did not get to

the current events game at the end of class as I had promised.

Sometimes things don't turn out as we expect them to. If someone had told me when I finished my high school career that I would one day be the graduation speaker at Trinity, I would have told them they were crazy. Some of you may be able to accurately predict what you will be doing twenty years from now, but I suspect that most of you will be surprised at where life takes you in the next two decades. One thing I can predict though is that today I will NOT talk too long, and this afternoon you WILL play the game. And, as Mr. Towles said last year, you may play it late into the night. Have fun tonight, but be careful. You want to be around for other, more important games you will be playing in the future. I've lost several friends over the years who played a little too hard and are not here today because of it.

I thought long and hard about what I should say to you here today. After your senior prank last week, I thought about putting on a policeman's uniform and performing a striptease. And I emphasize the word tease. Mrs. Verdery said she'd seen more skin at an Amish convention. But, I thought, that's already been done, and besides, I probably no longer have the uh.....MOVES of a male dancer, or of a female dancer for that matter! So I decided to go the more traditional route and give you some of my thoughts on the adult world into which you are now entering. So look out, here comes some free advice.

Enjoy and treasure your college years because they represent a once in a lifetime experience. Try to find a job you enjoy and find rewarding in other ways besides just monetarily. Although there's nothing wrong with making a lot of money too. Find someone with whom to share your life, and share theirs

with them. But don't do it so quickly that you miss the pleasures of being single. Value your family because it is the only one you have.

Always be tolerant of people who are different from you.

Never be politically correct, but don't confuse the First

Amendment with a license to be rude and insensitive to other people's feelings. Treat people with the respect and dignity they deserve. Always question authority and tradition, but once you have questioned them, listen to their answers with an open mind.

A great teacher once told his class, "never stop reading and you will never stop learning". I think that's good advice. Now for some of you that advice might have to be changed to, "start reading". But I hope that most of you will come to realize the wisdom of Jefferson when he wrote, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free.....it expects what never was and never will

be." Always cherish the fact that you live in a democracy, and always exercise the most basic right that those living in a democracy have, VOTE! Remember that many Americans have died in order that you might have this right, and that people around the world today are fighting and dying in order to secure the rights that you were born with for themselves. Never take these rights for granted. Know, as Madison did, that "it is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties."

Find your own religion or philosophy of life, don't let anyone tell you what to believe, but remember that most religions, and civil societies for that matter, are based on one simple rule: treat others as you would like them to treat you. As long as you begin with this rule, and do your best to live your life by it, in my opinion, it doesn't matter what your religious beliefs are. It is a troubled world we live in, but I think it would be a lot less

troubled if more people would practice that one simple rule. So try and change the world, but start by looking at yourself.

Never be overly concerned with what other people think of you though. Be your own person. But remember that if you get a reputation as a person of bad character, that will stick with you. Being yourself does not mean being a jerk. So wear your hair and your clothes the way you like, but strive to be, and then take pride in the fact that you are someone people know they can trust.

Well we have now covered surprises that life may hold, the virtue of moderation, college life, careers, money, marriage, family, politics , and religion. I think that's enough. I'll leave you with a quote from the former great New York Yankee catcher Yogi Berra that I think sums up what I've said here today. He said, "In life, when you come to a fork in the road,

take it." Congratulations on your accomplishment, and thank you again for the honor of being your speaker. I won't forget you. Now go play the game!