

Thank you Antwon, and thank you to the seniors for choosing me as your speaker. I remember when I spoke to the class of 1996 eight years ago. Things were perhaps not as polished as they are today. No one asked me about my biographical information then, so Mr. Hamlin, who was the president of that class, was left to come up with something on his own. I've always remembered and appreciated what he said though. He said, "Mr. Alley is an extremely fair teacher." He also said that when he asked his classmates what he should say about me, all the guys said, "He's so cool," and all the girls said, "He's so hot." I don't know if those things are still true, or if they ever were, but I hope I am still considered a fair teacher. Now, many of you have probably heard from your parents, when you've objected, "That's not fair," that the world is not fair, and they are right. It's not fair that people die at young ages or suffer

throughout their lives from diseases they contracted through no fault of their own. It's not fair that any child dies. It's also not fair that the Braves have only one World Series Championship, and it's certainly not fair that while the 2004 Trinity Golf Team had its most successful season in ten years, I was not named Coach of the Year! No, the world is not fair, and that is a valuable lesson to learn in life, but some people seem to relish this fact. (Not mustard or ketchup but relish!) They proclaim that the world is not fair, and this gives them the excuse to ignore all kinds of injustice. I'm reminded here of what I believe is called the Serenity Prayer, which asks, "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Just because some things will never be fair doesn't mean

nothing can be. So, my first bit of advice to you is to try to make the world a fairer place to be.

I've of course been given advice as to what else I should say to you here today. Some students in my AP Government classes (Lee Stratton!) just wanted me to play the Current Events Quiz Game with the whole group here, the seniors against everyone else. I know many of you are expecting some of the brilliant wit I exhibit on a daily basis in the classroom and only occasionally during Morning Meeting, so as not to upstage Mr. Hunroe. Others are undoubtedly expecting sage political advice, why I've even had requests to endorse various presidential candidates from this podium. As many of you know though, I always vote for Janet Reno! My wife Pam said, "Just don't talk about religion or the Dress Code." Mr. Mauck told me to just quote Yogi Berra again and I would be alright. That

was probably the best advice. You can't go wrong quoting Yogi! Mr. Towles assured me that the second time is easier, but Mrs. Towles, who says I promised but never gave her a copy of my speech from 1996, told me I couldn't just dust off the old speech and deliver it. I'd just like to say that the text of both speeches will be available on my website, boballey.com by tomorrow.

But Mrs. Towles I recently read my speech from 1996 as I was preparing to write this one, and the more I read the more I began to think, this is damn good advice, and I wrote it. Why should I deprive this group of such wisdom just because I've said it before? So here is a brief, not boxer, sample of the wisdom I imparted eight years ago.

“Enjoy and treasure your college years because they represent a once in a lifetime experience. 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.

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 religion you 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.”

See, wasn't that some good advice? Here are a few more quick thoughts. Enjoy and savor life. For it is far too short. As Mr. Hamlin said in a speech earlier this year, “choose to be happy.” Continue to learn and improve

yourself as a human being throughout your life. We are all works in progress. Maintain a good sense of humor.

I have one more bit of wisdom for you. I was recently asked by a good friend what my ambition was, and the question kind of threw me because I really hadn't been asked that in a while, and the first thing that came out of my mouth was, "Well, I'd like to teach in college." When pondering this question later though, I realized that was no longer my ambition. It once was, but sometimes ambitions change, and that's okay. My ambition now is to become the best teacher and coach I can at Trinity Episcopal School for as long as I can and to be the graduation speaker eight years from now. Aim high and follow your dreams and ambitions, but don't move just for the sake of moving. Don't be afraid to be happy where you are or to devote your life to one thing or place if it makes you happy. The

point is, whether it's staying put or moving around, find your role in life, and then put some butter on it!

I'd like thank the senior class again for this great honor. This is one of the highlights of my career, and if I fulfill my ambition of teaching at Trinity for many years to come, I will never forget this class. I'd also like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Aust for their tremendous support over the last three years for Trinity Golf, but more specifically I'd like to thank Rich's dad, whose name is also Rich, for giving me this cigar during one of our matches. I told him I would save it for a special occasion and I can't think of one more special than this, so I look forward to joining you in a few minutes.

Now let me follow Mr. Mauck's advice and leave you with some of the wisdom of the great Yankee catcher Yogi Berra

" It ain't over 'til it's over "

“ Never answer an anonymous letter.”

“You can observe a lot by watching.”

“The future ain’t what it used to be.”

“It gets late early out here.”

“If the world were perfect, it wouldn’t be”

and from 1996

“If you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

But of course, according to Yogi himself, “I didn’t really say everything I said.”

Congratulations and thank you again for this great honor.