

WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT SPEECH
THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD
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THANK YOU -- PRESIDENT KNOX, FACULTY, GRADUATES-TO-BE AND MOST HONORED GUESTS. PRESIDENT KNOX THANK YOU FOR THAT OVERLY GENEROUS INTRODUCTION. AND THANK YOU FOR EMBODYING SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND FOR EMBRACING A VISION FOR WESLEYAN THAT RESTORES TO HIGHER EDUCATION ITS FUNDAMENTAL MANDATE TO CULTIVATE CITIZEN AND SERVANT LEADERS FOR THE WORLD.

AN HONORARY DEGREE FROM THE WORLD'S FIRST COLLEGE TO GRANT DEGREES TO WOMEN IS AN EXTRAORDINARY AND HUMBLING HONOR. I ACCEPT IT AS A TRIBUTE TO ALL OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED TO MAKE HANDS ON SERVICE A POSITIVE FORCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES- LOCALLY, NATIONALLY, AND INTERNATIONALLY.

I ALSO ACCEPT IT, WITH A GREAT DEAL OF PERSONAL MEANING, AS A TRIBUTE TO MY BELOVED GRANDMOTHER, ELIZABETH CANNON NUNN- AN ALUMNUS OF WESLEYAN, CLASS OF 1926. SHE HAD A GREAT DEVOTION TO WESLEYAN AND JOYFULLY SANG THE ALMA MATER INTO HER LATE 80'S AT EVERY REUNION. IN FACT, AT HER 50TH CLASS REUNION SHE WAS URGED TO RE-CREATE HER ROLE AS MAY QUEEN. SHE WAS QUITE EMBARRASSED ABOUT THIS RE-ORDINATION AND JUST BEFORE SHE MOVED ON TO THE STAGE TO BE SERENADED WITH A "PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELODY", SHE TOLD MY AUNT "IF I HAD HAD ANY JUDGMENT IN 1926, I WOULD HAVE REFUSED TO SERVE AS MAY QUEEN, AND THEN I WOULD NOT BE IN THIS FIX TODAY."

BUT I KNOW THAT SHE WOULD BE VERY THRILLED TODAY AT THE AMAZING STUDENTS WHO HAVE EARNED THE ELIZABETH CANNON NUNN SCHOLARSHIPS OVER THE YEARS – LIKE KRISTEN CURRY IN THE GRADUATING CLASS TODAY – WHO HAS DONE EVERYTHING FROM DIRECTING A PLAY TO VOLUNTEERING AT AUNTI MAGGIE'S TABLE.

MY GRANDMOTHER WOULD ALSO BE SO PROUD TO SEE ME STANDING HERE. I KNOW THERE ARE SOME PROUD GRANDMOTHER'S IN THE AUDIENCE WHO FEEL THE SAME WAY TODAY ABOUT THEIR GRADUATING GRANDDAUGHTERS. GRANDMOTHER'S HAVE A WAY OF UNIQUELY AND DEEPLY APPRECIATING US. IF MY OWN GRANDMOTHER WERE ALIVE TODAY, SHE MIGHT BE THE ONLY PERSON WHO WOULD ACTUALLY THINK I DESERVE AN HONORARY DEGREE!

THE NUNN FAMILY HAS A LEGACY OF CONNECTION WITH WESLEYAN, INCLUDING MY AUNT BETTY WHO ATTENDED WESLEYAN AND IS NOW A DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS SERVING ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO MY FATHER RECEIVED AN HONORARY DEGREE FROM WESLEYAN. SO WE HAVE THREE GENERATIONS WORTH OF GRATITUDE FOR WESLEYAN'S PROFOUND GIFTS TO WOMEN AND THE WORLD. THE FOURTH GENERATION IS HERE IN THE AUDIENCE TODAY- MY OWN 5 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER ELIZABETH NUNN MARTIN, AND MY GRANDMOTHER'S NAMESAKE.
(PAUSE AND WAVE)

I WANTED HER TO BE HERE TO BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THAT FAMILY DEBT AND OBLIGATION TO THIS INSTITUTION AND IN THE HOPES THAT SOME OF THE INSPIRATION, CHARACTER, AND LEADERSHIP OF

YOU GRADUATES WOULD RUB OFF OR AT LEAST BECOME A SEED PLANTED INTO THE RECESSES OF HER CONSCIOUSNESS.

IN THINKING ABOUT THIS DAY, I HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO REACQUAINT MYSELF WITH WESLEYAN AND TO BE INTRODUCED TO SOME OF THE EXTRAORDINARY STUDENTS WHO ARE GRADUATING TODAY. I HAVE LEARNED THAT TWO THIRDS OF WESLEYAN STUDENTS ARE INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY SERVICE THROUGH THE LANE CENTER AND THAT YOU HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS WITH THE HIGHEST FEDERAL RECOGNITION A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY CAN RECEIVE FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERING, SERVICE-LEARNING, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

WHAT HAS IMPRESSED ME MOST OF ALL, THOUGH, IS THE WAY THAT YOU, THE STUDENT'S AND ALUMNI DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCE HERE. THIS IS SUMMED UP BY

EMILY DUKE WHO SAYS, "THERE ARE NO BOUNDARIES HERE. NO LIMITATIONS. YOU CAN TRY ANYTHING, DO ANYTHING, ACHIEVE ANYTHING.

AND SHANTRAS LAKES, WHO CREDITS WESLEYAN WITH TEACHING HER TO "DREAM BIG" AND THAT "IT IS POSSIBLE AS A WOMAN TO BE WHATEVER YOUR PASSION LEADS YOU TO BE.

AND LAKEISHA LOWE SAYS, THIS IS A COLLEGE THAT IMPACTS YOU FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

YOU, THE GRADUATES, HAVE WORKED TREMENDOUSLY HARD TO EARN THE WESLEYAN DEGREE THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE THIS MORNING. BUT THERE IS A NETWORK OF THOUSANDS MORE WHO HAVE ENABLED THIS GIFT- THE FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS, ADMINISTRATORS, ALUMNI AND FACULTY THAT SACRIFICED AND SUPPORTED YOU TO MAKE THIS DAY POSSIBLE.

THE FOCUS OF THIS DAY IS, AS IT SHOULD BE, ABOUT YOU- THE GRADUATES, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU GRADUATES- THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN LIFTED UP BY COUNTLESS HANDS, TO STAND WITH ME, (GESTURE TO STAND)

AND SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION FOR THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP, PARENTING, AND SUPPORT THAT HAVE BROUGHT YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY.

(ASK THEM TO RISE UP AND APPLAUSE)

LETS APPRECIATE THOSE IN THE AUDIENCE THAT ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE YOU AND THAT HAVE BEEN CHEERING YOU ON THROUGHOUT YOUR LIVES.

(PAUSE)

GRADUATES, AS I LOOK OUT AT YOU, I CAN RECALL THAT WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE, I HAD ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA, WHAT I WAS GOING TO DO. (PAUSE) I DID KNOW THAT I WANTED TO LIVE A LIFE OF ADVENTURE AND MEANING AND THAT I WANTED IT TO INVOLVE SERVING OTHERS.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE A FEW REFLECTIONS WITH YOU TODAY ABOUT THE PURSUIT OF ADVENTURE AND MEANING AND YOUR ROLE IN CHANGING THE WORLD.

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SYMPATHETIC WITH E.B WHITE'S DILEMMA WHEN HE SAID, "I ARISE IN THE MORNING TORN BETWEEN A DESIRE TO IMPROVE THE WORLD AND A DESIRE TO ENJOY THE WORLD. THIS MAKES IT HARD TO PLAN THE DAY."

I BELIEVE THAT SAVORING THE WORLD AND SAVING IT CAN BE A PART OF EACH OF OUR DAYS AND OUR LIVES.

THIS PLAYS OUT IN MY OWN HOUSEHOLD, WHERE MY HUSBAND HAS ADOPTED THE MOTTO FOR OUR CHILDREN THAT THEY REPEAT EVERYDAY AS THEY RUN OUT THE DOOR. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TODAY, HE ASKS, TO WHICH THEY DUTIFULLY RESPOND- HAVE FUN. BE FUN!

I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT THIS LITTLE PLAYFUL FAMILY MOTTO ACTUALLY HAS A LOT TO RECOMMEND IT. (ALTHOUGH MY MOTHER WOULD BEG TO DIFFER AND AFTER HEARING THIS SAID ONE TOO MANY TIMES, PROCLAIMED, THERE IS MORE TO LIFE THAN HAVING FUN AND BEING FUN!) PERHAPS IN RESPONSE, HER SON IN LAW HAS NOW ADDED JOHN ADAMS INVOCATION TO HIS CHILDREN- BE GOOD AND DO GOOD.

MY GRANDMOTHER, ELIZABETH NUNN, TAUGHT ME A LOT ABOUT RELISHING LIFE. IT WAS PARTLY REVEALED IN A LITTLE STORY THAT SHE ONLY TOLD ME AFTER I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE. KEEP IN MIND THAT MY GRANDMOTHER, LOVED SCHOOL, LOVED LEARNING AND WAS INSATIABLY CURIOUS (SHE LOOKED UP NEW WORDS IN THE DICTIONARY INTO HER 90'S) AND, BY THE WAY, SHE WAS VERY PROPER. SHALL WE SAY WESLEYAN 1926 PROPER.

WHEN SHE WAS IN COLLEGE SHE TRAVELLED ACROSS COUNTRY TO ATTEND BERKELEY SUMMER SCHOOL. AS SHE CROSSED THE NATION BY STEAM TRAIN, AN EMBER OF COAL, FLEW THROUGH THE WINDOW AND STRUCK HER FRIEND IN THE EYE.

SO HER FRIEND COULD NOT ATTEND CLASSES WHILE IT HEALED. AFTER ONLY A FEW DAYS OF SCHOOL, MY GRANDMOTHER DECIDED THAT HER FRIEND WAS ACTUALLY HAVING MORE FUN THAN SHE WAS. SO, SHE SAID, WITH A TWINKLE, SHE DECIDED TO DROP OUT TO NURSE HER FRIEND BACK TO HEALTH. AND SO, THEY SPENT THE SUMMER EXPLORING AND INDULGING IN THE BOUNTY OF CALIFORNIA. I JUST LOVE THE IDEA OF MY EVER DUTIFUL AND PROPER GRANDMOTHER FROM CORDELE, GEORGIA, IN THE 1920'S, PLAYING HOOKY FROM SUMMER SCHOOL WITH HER FRIEND- AND DISCOVERING THE WORLD.

THIS PASSION FOR EXPLORATION SUSTAINED HER THROUGH AGE 96. IN THE WAKE OF MY GRANDFATHER'S DEATH SHE ONCE AGAIN BEGAN TRAVELLING AND INSTEAD OF, AS SHE TOLD ME, GIVING UP, SHE GAVE IN TO THE WORLD'S WONDER. SHE LITERALLY CIRCUMNAVIGATED THE GLOBE AND EVEN JOINED UP WITH A GROUP OF COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO FLEW AROUND THE WORLD FOR A SEMESTER.

IN TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE, WE FALL IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD. IN MY OWN EXPERIENCE, WHEN I FACED A WALL OF DISLOCATION, ANXIETY, AND EVEN DESPAIR DURING COLLEGE, I MANAGED TO PICK MYSELF UP, GET ON A BOAT WITH 500 OTHER STUDENTS AND CROSS THE OCEAN FOR A SEMESTER AT SEA TO EXPLORE 12 COUNTRIES. IT WAS THE EXACT ANTIDOTE THAT I NEEDED - AND IT CREATED IN ME A LIFE-LONG PASSION FOR TRAVEL- THE KIND OF TRAVEL WHERE YOU VENTURE BY LOCAL BUS IN GUATEMALA SADDLED BETWEEN GOATS AND CHICKENS, OR CROSS INTO THE WEST BANK TO TALK

WITH PALESTINIAN WOMEN ABOUT DEMOCRACY, OR RISE BEFORE SUNSET TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF THE HIMALAYAS OR BATHE IN THE GANGES.

SOMETIMES, WE ALL HAVE TO PLAY HOOKY OR GET ON A BOAT AND ESCAPE INTO THE WONDER OF THE WORLD. AS YOU CONSIDER YOUR NEXT STEPS, DON'T NEGLECT TO TAKE PRECIOUS TIME TO EXPERIENCE THE WORLD FULLY. IN FALLING IN LOVE WITH AND SAVORING THE WORLD, WE FIND THAT WE ARE IMPELLED TO SERVE IT AND SAVE IT.

MY OWN BOAT TRIP AROUND THE WORLD, LED ME TO ADDITIONAL SEMESTERS IN OXFORD AND THEN TO INDIA AND BY THE TIME I GRADUATED FROM SCHOOL, I KNEW THAT I WANTED TO TURN MY ADVENTURES INTO MEANING AND MAKE A CONTRIBUTION.

SERENDIPITOUSLY, AS I SEARCHED FOR MY CALLING I MET A SMALL GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO WANTED TO CREATE WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY. THESE TWELVE FRIENDS LITERALLY EACH PUT \$50 INTO A HAT, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES AND STARTED VOLUNTEERING THEMSELVES. WE CALLED THE EFFORT HANDS ON ATLANTA AND BEGAN WITH A FEW MONTHLY PROJECTS LIKE THE COMMUNITY FOOD BANK AND HOUSE-BUILDING. WE STARTED TO SEND OUT A POSTCARD AND GOT UP TO 6 PROJECTS EACH MONTH. I BECAME THE FIRST STAFF PERSON, WORKING 10 HOURS A WEEK IN A CLOSET OF THE DAYS INN BUILDING ON BUFORD HIGHWAY.

NONE OF US COULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT TWENTY YEARS LATER, HANDS ON NETWORK WOULD HAVE GROWN FROM TWELVE VOLUNTEERS TO MILLIONS OF VOLUNTEERS. WE COULD NOT HAVE FATHOMED THAT OUR SIX PROJECTS WOULD GROW TO COMPRISE 25,000 MONTHLY PROJECTS RANGING FROM BUILDING WHEELCHAIR RAMPS TO BUILDING PLAYGROUNDS TO TUTORING CHILDREN. WE NOW HAVE HANDS ON ORGANIZATIONS IN 250 COMMUNITIES. WHEN WE SAT AROUND A LIVING ROOM IN ATLANTA, WE COULD NOT HAVE ENVISIONED THAT THE EFFORT WOULD SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE TO HANDSON MANILA OR HANDSON SHANGHAI.

HANDSON NETWORK IS NOW THE LARGEST VOLUNTEER NETWORK IN THE WORLD. OUR MISSION IS TO INSPIRE, EQUIP AND MOBILIZE PEOPLE TO CREATE CHANGE IN THE WORLD. THAT HAPPENS IN A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT WAYS. FOR INSTANCE, THROUGH OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MISSIONFISH WE ENABLE PEOPLE TO USE THEIR PURCHASING POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. EVERY TIME YOU BUY OR SELL SOMETHING ON EBAY YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE A PORTION OF THE PROCEEDS TO YOUR FAVORITE CHARITY. OVER THE LAST 5 YEARS, WE HAVE RAISED 150 MILLION DOLLARS FOR NONPROFITS.

ANOTHER DIMENSION OF OUR WORK HAPPENS IN THE WAKE OF DISASTERS. IN THE AFTERMATH OF KATRINA, WE ORGANIZED 75,000 VOLUNTEERS TO HELP REPAIR THOUSANDS OF HOMES AND HELP PEOPLE REBUILD THEIR LIVES. AS I SPEAK, HUNDREDS OF HANDS ON VOLUNTEERS ARE DEPLOYING IN NASHVILLE AND IN THE GULF COAST.

AND WE ARE ENGAGING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SERVICE THROUGH SCHOOLS AND MORE THAN 1,800 KIDS CARE CLUBS AROUND THE COUNTRY AND WORLD- INCLUDING RECENT ADDITIONS FROM NEPAL AND SAUDI ARABIA

OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, IT HAS BEEN MY GREAT PRIVILEGE TO WORK SIDE BY SIDE WITH THOUSANDS OF INDIVIDUALS COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE .

MY FAVORITE VOLUNTEER OF LATE IS MS. EDITH HARVEY OF LAWRENCEVILLE, GEORGIA. AT AGE 95 SHE HAS COOKED MORE THAN ONE MILLION MEALS FOR HER FELLOW SENIORS. IN THE PROCESS, SHE HAS MENTORED 100 FORMER PRISON INMATES. IN HER OWN WORDS, SHE BELIEVES THAT "NOT ONE HAS GONE BAD YET." ON TOP OF THIS, MS. HARVEY HAS RAISED 17 CHILDREN AND FOSTER CHILDREN.

I HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE THAT IT IS THE IMAGINATION AND ENERGY OF OUR CITIZENS, LIKE MS. HARVEY, THAT WRITE THE NARRATIVE OF CHANGE – TODAY AND THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY.

FROM BEN FRANKLIN TO MARTIN LUTHER KING, WE HAVE BEEN SHAPED BY VOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS THAT HAVE ORGANIZED, ADVOCATED, AND CREATED. VOLUNTEERS BUILT INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE RED CROSS, SIERRA CLUB AND THE SALVATION ARMY. VOLUNTEERS HAVE SHIFTED THE NATION'S MORAL COMPASS. THEY HAVE INSPIRED AND DEMANDED NEW LEGISLATION FROM THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT. THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES WE ALL TAKE FOR GRANTED HAVE BEEN WON BY THE PERSEVERANCE AND MORAL COURAGE OF CITIZEN LEADERS.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE DEFINING AND ICONIC LEADERS OF OUR NATION, THEY ARE SERVICE LEADERS WHO CALLED OTHERS TO ACTION: CLARA BARTON; SUSAN B. ANTHONY, OR RACHEL CARSON.

LAST YEAR POINTS OF LIGHT INSTITUTE HOSTED PRESIDENT OBAMA AND PRESIDENT GEORGE H. W. BUSH TOGETHER FOR OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY. PRESIDENT OBAMA ARTICULATED THE CENTRALITY OF SERVICE IN OUR AMERICAN NARRATIVE. HE SAID

IT IS THE "STORY OF PATRIOTS WHO SET FORTH THE IDEALS THAT ANIMATE OUR DEMOCRACY, AND ALL THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND DIED FOR THOSE IDEALS. IT'S THE STORY OF WOMEN WHO REACHED FOR THE BALLOT; AND PEOPLE WHO STOOD UP, AND SAT IN, AND MARCHED FOR JUSTICE. THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN THE STORY OF THIS NATION -- THE STORY OF THOSE WHO STEPPED FORWARD IN OUR DARKEST HOURS TO SERVE IT. THOSE WHO ROSE TO ANSWER THE DEFINING QUESTIONS OF THEIR TIME: COLONY OR COUNTRY? FREE OR HALF FREE? SEPARATE BUT EQUAL, OR TRULY EQUAL? THOSE FOLKS WEREN'T IN IT FOR THE MONEY. THOSE FOLKS WERE VOLUNTEERS. THEIR SERVICE WASN'T "EXTRA." IT WAS THE WORK THAT CHANGED THIS COUNTRY. "

SO OUR HISTORY TELLS US OF THE CENTRALITY OF GIVING BACK. AND WE NOW HAVE A LOT OF RESEARCH THAT FURTHER REVEALS ITS IMPORTANCE.

WE ACTUALLY KNOW THAT GIVING BACK MAKES YOU HAPPIER--IT HAS BEEN CLINICALLY PROVEN TO REDUCE DEPRESSION.

AND WE KNOW SERVICE MAKES YOU SMARTER. YOUNG PEOPLE WHO VOLUNTEER JUST ONE HOUR A WEEK ARE 50% LESS LIKELY TO ABUSE DRUGS, ALCOHOL, OR CIGARETTES. (YOU CAN BET I AM STARTING ELIZABETH ON HER VOLUNTEER PLAN NOW!)

AND IF THAT WAS NOT ENOUGH, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT SERVING OTHERS HELPS YOU LIVE LONGER. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR SENIORS IS A MORE IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF HEALTH THAN OBESITY OR SMOKING!

YOU WILL SEARCH FOR MEANING THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE, BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT YOU WILL FIND NO GREATER FULFILLMENT THAN IN SERVING OTHERS.

AND AS YOU LEAVE THE UNIVERSITY, YOU ENTER A WORLD THAT DESPERATELY NEEDS YOU.

DOMESTICALLY, WE ARE FACED WITH ENORMOUS NEEDS. ALMOST 20% OF OUR NATION'S CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY AND HALF OF OUR MINORITY STUDENTS DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.

GLOBALLY, WE LIVE AT A TIME IN WHICH WE HAVE THE RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY TO ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND GLOBAL HEALTH INEQUITIES, BUT LACK THE WILL AND IMAGINATION TO DO IT.

LET ME JUST SHARE ONE EXAMPLE,- GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. PULITZER PRIZE WINNER NICHOLAS KRISTOFF ASSERTS "THAT MORE GIRLS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY ARE GIRLS, THAN MEN WERE KILLED IN ALL OF THE BATTLES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. "

THERE ARE SOCIAL CHANGE MOVEMENTS, LIKE THE GLOBAL FIGHT FOR GENDER EQUALITY, THAT ARE WAITING FOR HEROIC CITIZEN ACTION.

MANY OF US LOOK BACK WITH LONGING TO BE A PART OF SOME CLEAR CUT MOVEMENT OF CHANGE LIKE THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. BUT THERE ARE MORAL ISSUES TODAY THAT ARE CLEAR AND WE NEED YOUNG PEOPLE, TO HAVE THE MORAL LENSES TO SEE THESE ISSUES AND TO ACT UPON THEM.

WHATEVER YOUR PASSION, FIND A WAY OF APPLYING IT IN SERVICE. WHETHER IT IS RE-BUILDING IN HAITI, MENTORING A CHILD, OR GETTING INVOLVED IN POLITICS.

REMEMBER THAT CHANGE STARTS WITH INDIVIDUALS. DON'T WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE. TAKE THE BOUNTY OF YOUR EDUCATION AND, WHATEVER YOUR PATH, FIND A WAY TO SERVE OTHERS.

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK IS A SINGING GROUP THAT GOT THEIR START DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND THEY HAVE A SONG THAT REPEATS "WE ARE THE ONES WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.

AS YOU GRADUATE TODAY, KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE ONES THAT WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR.

MAY YOU EACH FIND ADVENTURE AND MEANING IN YOUR LIFE'S JOURNEY TO SAVOR AND SAVE OUR WORLD.

THANK YOU.