

Student Lasallian Commencement Address

December 2019

Presented by: Carley Patterson

Good morning, members of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Livingston, honored guest, faculty, staff, friends, family, and of course, class of 2019- we made it. I am more than honored to be here before you and with you today.

I would like to begin by sharing a wonderful discovery with you. It is called the butterfly-effect—it is the idea that the tiniest thing can have a tremendous impact; it suggests that if we were to track a hurricane from its very beginning, we would find that it was all caused by a change in air pressure from the flutter of a butterfly's wings some weeks prior and half way across the world. If something that came onto this earth as a caterpillar can do that, then we might be able to accomplish more than we can even imagine here today.

At Lewis I have had the opportunity to do many things I would not have been able to elsewhere. Lewis allowed me to continue to play the sport I love by inviting me to be a part of the women's soccer team. This opportunity brought me lifelong friendships while also teaching me the valuable lesson of commitment, of never giving up even when it seems like my only option.

I also got to take on the formidable role of being a Residents Assistant during my time here. I would have never pictured myself in this position, but Lewis continued to challenge me to do more and to be more. I am so grateful for having accepted this challenge; it has shown me the importance of community.

Finally, I had the privilege of being a part of the College of Business. I was one of those people who went into college not knowing what I wanted to do. Somehow, I ended up a Marketing major with a minor in Spanish. As a marketer, I've learned the value of empathy. I learned that you can only solve problems if you can first understand where people are coming from. As a Spanish minor, I jumped on the opportunity of studying abroad in Seville, Spain this past summer. My travels not only helped me strengthen my Spanish, they helped me to widen my perspective. This adventure taught me the value of having an open mind and an open heart, not only as a Spanish minor, or a Marketing major, but as a human being.

While all of these things have taught me separate lessons, together they've shown me that I can do the unthinkable-- that I can do so much more than I might imagine.

Now, you may not have played a sport, or been an RA, or studied abroad- but you've all done things you never thought you could do.

Never forget that; never forget about who you were before you did all of those things, and never forget about everyone that has helped you get here. Because if you forget that, you will forget how far you've come, and to whom you need to be grateful.

Matthew 13:32 tells us that the mustard seed "is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." Without allowing ourselves to grow, we would not be able to help others grow. Our Lasallian mission here at Lewis puts emphasis on engaging in a quality, value-

based education together and by association, as students, faculty, and staff. As members of the Lewis University community, we have learned to be lifelong learners, who are committed to growth and the search for truth. Here, in our inclusive community this task has not been too difficult, but as we leave here today, we will encounter new challenges, and so we need to be prepared to hold onto these values and continue to grow in our respect for others, in our faith in God, and in our quest for justice for all.

As we all sit here today, celebrating our greatest academic achievement--another thing that once seemed impossible--I want you to remember who you were before you came to Lewis and all the wonderful people who have helped you get to this point.

While the flutter of the butterfly's wings from weeks ago played an important role in changing the world, it could not have done it on its own. Just as we could not have completed our college career on our own. Therefore, let us give one final thank you to all who are here today and to all who have helped us along the way.

Class of 2019, here's to the beginning of something great. Thank you!