

Student Lasallian Commencement Address
December 2010
Presented by: Mark Serratore

Good afternoon members of the board of trustees, Brother James, honored guests, faculty, staff, fellow graduates, parents, family and friends. So here we are. School's out for summer (or in this case, winter). School's out forever (at least for some of us.)

We survived the teenage wasteland of high school and, while some of our classmates said "we don't need no education," we chose to pursue a higher degree of learning and so we gather here today to celebrate the completion of that goal. We are the graduating class of 2010. How did we reach this point? How did we become Lewis University Flyers?

I'll be honest with you: I was all set to go to another university. I had visited the campus three times and had a cousin who graduated from there. I had the shirts and even the novelty blanket with the school name on it. Despite being comfortable with the school and enrolling there, my parents insisted on visiting one more place. Lewis University it was called. It was not far from home and an internet search also revealed that they had a fantastic radio and TV program, which was what I was looking for. We visited the campus and it was nice, but it didn't turn me against my current choice of school. Then I saw the radio and TV equipment and knew I had a difficult decision to make. It was fantastic equipment, comparable to what the professionals use. There was no way I could go to the other university now, for if I did, I'd always be thinking about the facilities I could have used. I knew at that moment that I was on my way to becoming a Lewis Flyer.

Lewis is a Lasallian university, meaning its mission and educational philosophy is based upon the teachings of Saint John Baptist De La Salle, a French priest who lived during the 17th century, and who founded the Christian Brothers. De La Salle believed in academic excellence, outstanding teachers, and practical, useful education. One of his convictions was that students should be given the best environment in which to learn and study. The broadcasting department here at Lewis definitely checks out, as does the nursing program, which just got a beautiful new

building. The aviation department has access to an airport and a new science center is currently under construction. The facilities, you've got to admit, are getting better, a little better, all the time.

Another one of De La Salle's beliefs was the importance of personal attention to students. Here at Lewis, this is most evident through the mission value of association: forming a community of mutual respect, collaboration, and service. These traits are present in the Lewis family. This is the family of faculty and staff that prepares students for life after graduation, backed with a solid degree and a plan for the future. This family also includes alumni, who reside everywhere from Phoenix Arizona all the way to Tacoma, Philadelphia, Atlanta, and LA. They give back by helping the next generation with internships and job recommendations. The Lewis family produces graduates who love Lewis so much that they come back to teach and work here.

The Lewis family is also about helping other members of the family. A year ago, when I was struck with an illness that put me in the hospital for a good portion of October, the Lewis family was there. They were there in the notes, phone calls, and personal visits by fellow students and even staff. They were there helping me through the semester so that I wouldn't have to drop my classes. Professor John Carey was there to ferry me between school and home, twice a week, so that my parents wouldn't have to drive me to the hospital and school. Students Melissa Cortez, Kevin McDermott, Alex Duncan, and Joe Ventrella were there when I was too sick to come back to school for Halloween, so they brought Halloween to me.

One of my final acts as an undergrad was to give a tour of the campus to some scouts who had come to visit. As I showed them around, I shared my Lewis experiences in the hopes that, maybe one day, they too would join the Lewis family.

Why did you choose Lewis? Was it the high quality teaching facilities? Perhaps it was the excellence of the professors. Maybe you stayed for the beauty of the campus, the intensity of the sports, the proximity to home, or the affordability. Whatever the reason may have been, you made a choice and today it's become the right choice.

So here we are class of 2010. As we exit through those doors, we enter the real world. It will be different. It will be scary. It will be strange. But we must turn to face the strange changes and make an imprint on the world. We must take the knowledge and skills we've learned during our time at Lewis and put them to good use. We must remember our duty to the Lewis family, as alumni, to assist future students. We need to take the chance on that Lewis intern or persuade someone else to do so. We need to show students the ropes and help them succeed.

Having worked in the radio station on campus for 3 and a half years, music is a big part of who I am. I've referenced many songs throughout this address and would like to close with one more. And in the end, the love you take, is equal to, the love, you make.