

## Josephine Pagliughi Valedictorian Speech Spring 2013



Good afternoon, Members of the Board of Trustees, President Dugan, Distinguished Guests, Members of the Administration, Faculty and Staff, and Fellow Graduates. I am truly honored to be here before you presenting the commencement speech for the class of 2013. To begin, I would like to congratulate my fellow classmates on achieving this major milestone.

Looking back at my years at St. Francis, I can honestly say that there is no better school that is filled with so many wonderful staff and faculty members who dedicate their time to the fulfillment of every student's individual goals. The accounting department is one such example. In addition to the engaging lesson plans, which bestowed upon me the knowledge of my accounting education, one professor took it a step further. He made it his mission to help me fulfill my dreams of becoming an accountant. Not only did he help me with my resume, practice mock interviews, and recommended me for my first internship at National Grid, he gave me the courage to step out of my shell as the shy girl I once was to the confident mature woman who stands before you today.

Walt Disney once said "All our dreams can come true- if we have the courage to pursue them." Our dreams began when we opened our college acceptance letters four years ago. We envisioned ourselves becoming accountants, teachers, nurses, philosophers, and much more. St Francis is known as being the small college of big dreams, where we spent the last four years developing our knowledge in our focus areas making our dreams a reality. Today, we take the final step in our college experience. Our hard work, long hours of studying, and constant stress has finally paid off. It is time to take the knowledge we have gained and apply what we have learned to the pursuit of our future endeavors. For some that may be the continuation of their education, to others it is the start of their chosen profession. Whichever the case may be, I wish all my fellow students all the happiness and fortune this life may bring.

At this time, I would like to thank several important members of my life that either encouraged or supported me through this incredible journey. This person taught me the value of education and gave me the building blocks needed to become a successful woman. She encouraged me in all of my endeavors, provided me with emotional support, and spoke highly of me to anyone who would listen. Mom, thank you for all your hard work, support, and love throughout these difficult and exciting years. I love you very much.

This next person has stood by me every day, helping me when I thought I could no longer push forward. Thank you Joe for always listening, offering words of encouragement, and guiding me to be the best I can be. I love you.

To my friends, who I spent countless hours with, studying for tests together, proof reading each other's works, and making memories that will last a lifetime. Those few individuals you know who you are, thank you and I could not have done it without you.

I would like to thank St. Francis College for giving me the opportunity of developing my education and providing me with a safe learning environment, a dedicated staff, and encouraging atmosphere. Especially to the members of the career development center who gave the students the ability to meet with recruiters, develop resumes, and provided us with the tools needed to achieve our life goals. I would also like to thank the student activities office, who lightened up the school with new events every week from karaoke in the cafeteria to the Valentine's Day auction. These joyful and exciting activities added the fun element to our school life.

I would also like to thank National Grid for giving me the opportunity to build on my knowledge of accounting and gain experience working with a successful staff who taught me the value of hard work and dedication to my craft.

When I was asked to be Valedictorian, I had no idea where to begin. While sitting in my room talking to my brother about what I wanted to share with each of you today, my brother told me "I cannot believe how far you have come. I am so proud of you." And then it hit me, I wanted to share a little bit of my story with you.

Growing up, I was never the best or the brightest student, I had average grades. Then, I met this one teacher who changed my life forever. He handed me back a test I received a 70 on and told me I could do much better than this if I tried. From that day forward, I believed him. I decided to put 110% into everything I did, and clearly you can see how that turned out. The point of my story – is that we can all do great things when we apply ourselves – you – WE are stars.

Graduates, it is about that time where we throw up our hats, say farewell to St. Francis and Hello to our prospective futures. We are the class of 2013. It is time that we shape ourselves to be the best that we can possibly be and to become role models for future generations.

I leave you with these inspiring words that fill me with hope, courage, and happiness whenever I read them:

*Look well to this day,*

*For it and it alone is life.*

*In its brief course*

*Lie all the essence of your existence:*

*The Glory of Growth*  
*The satisfaction of Achievement*  
*The splendor of Beauty*

*For yesterday is but a dream,*  
*And tomorrow is but a vision.*  
*But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness*  
*And every tomorrow a vision of hope (Anonymous)*

Once again congratulations to the class of 2013, go forth into this world and do great things!  
Thank you,  
Josephine Pagliughi