

SETTING A HIGH BAR

Remarks for Final Convocation

April 25, 2019

Welcome to today's celebration of our students' curricular and co-curricular achievements. Hampden-Sydney is teeming with talented and remarkable young men, and today we honor those who have distinguished themselves among their peers in our classrooms, laboratories, studios, and in various roles across campus. Today's ceremony will also include a special recognition of our students who serve as first responders to thank them for the acts of heroism that they routinely and selflessly perform at any time of the day and night and in every season, and also for their great fortitude for being among the first on the scene of this spring's tragic accident involving four of our seniors, where they were witness to the death of one of our brothers.

Those of you being honored today set a high bar for your fellow students and, through your example, you help make Hampden-Sydney the vibrant place of learning that it is. The accomplishments, leadership, and service we honor today are due, in part, to the intellect, talent, and ambition granted to you by our creator, but they are also a product of the extraordinary coming-of-age experience that dedicated members of this College's faculty and staff have provided you. Since your first days on campus, our faculty and staff members have gotten to know you, they have appreciated your strengths, challenged you to improve your weaknesses, learned about your passions, and presented opportunities for you to become your best selves. It is important to recognize their vital contributions to your achievements and success, and to remember that few of our achievements are entirely of our own making.

You arrived at Hampden-Sydney well prepared to excel because of the work of your many grade school and high school teachers, and because of the family members and others who served as early mentors and role models. They provided the foundation upon which you could build a successful college career. Today is also an opportunity to remember and thank your parents, our alumni, and other benefactors whose financial and scholarship contributions have made it possible for you to have the many rich benefits of a Hampden-Sydney College education.

Finally, let us acknowledge and honor those who have gone before us who have done so much to make Hampden-Sydney the distinctive and remarkable college that it is. As we move through the presentation of awards today, you will see that most of our awards carry the name of an individual or individuals. Some are alumni who walked these halls and this beautiful campus before you; others are professors or staff members who made the education of Hampden-Sydney students their life's work; and others are benefactors, whose support makes possible the teaching and learning that we do at this great College.

To today's award recipients, our most enthusiastic congratulations!