



MarymountManhattan

Commencement

May 23, 2014

Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center

New York City

Valedictory Address: Josephine Anne Genevieve Ancelle '14

How many of you know exactly what you are going to do next (and I don't mean right after this... I know you are going to take pictures with your parents, and selfies in your caps and gowns, post them on Instagram, and party for at least a week). But how many of you know what you are going to do next in your life? Raise your hand if you know a little bit more than you did when you started college? Raise your hand if you know a little bit less than when you started college?

Who knows who they are at 18 years old? Who knows who they are at 21 or 22 years old? College is not meant to answer this question for you. College is meant to give you the tools so that you can find out yourself throughout your life. College teaches you where to look for the information that you may need to answer the many questions that will arise, but mostly, college gives you mentors who have and will continue to inspire you, and peers who will go through the same ups and downs and have the same questions you may have, even after you enter the work force (or return to live in your parents' basement for a while!... A short while!).

Some of you may feel like you know exactly where you are headed and some of you may have no clue. But that doesn't matter. No one is ahead and no one is behind, because at some point in life, you will find yourself in the other person's shoes.

When I was 18 years old, I had my life all planned out. I had just moved to New York City to pursue my career as a singer, which had been my dream for as long as I can remember. I come from a family of artists so it is not surprising that I would want to sing. However, since I grew up in Paris, I am not sure what put it in my head that New York would be the place to be. I like to believe that my attraction for New York City came from this one film I watched dozens of times when I was a child (dubbed in French of course): Annie. I loved that film so much that I wanted to learn the songs in English as well, so since I did not speak a word of



English, my mom had written out the words phonetically for me. I would sing the songs, not understanding what I was singing, but feeling happy.

Well, in case you were wondering, I am not graduating with a musical theater or other artistic concentration. I am graduating as a speech language pathology and audiology major. I did pursue a career as a singer songwriter for many years, and in my mid-twenties, started to question my choices, once I started to realize that this career was not what I had envisioned when I was 7 watching Annie. So I decided to get an education, thanks to a lot of support and advice from my wonderful family and friends. It was quite terrifying to change directions and mostly to go to university when I had always disliked school.

America has a wonderful educational system. I know many complain that it is too expensive and that it has many flaws, but the biggest quality that it offers is that it opens its doors to anyone at any time in their life. It is part of the American mentality that one can and should reinvent oneself multiple times in a lifetime. As I have said, who has the maturity to know who they are at 18 years old? Although I thought I did, I certainly did not. Marymount gave me the opportunity to reinvent myself. This would have been very difficult to do in France. I fell in love with Marymount, the people and professors, and with studying, as soon as I sat in my first class. Before I started, I had told myself I should at least finish one semester and take it from there. I loved my experience here so much that I am excited to start my master's degree in the fall, aware that I don't know what the future holds, but feeling like anything is possible.

Anything is possible when we have solid foundations, so let's take a moment to reflect on these past years spent at Marymount before we start to look ahead. Our experiences as students here would not have been as inspiring and exciting without the singing resonating in the stairways, the dialogues rehearsed in the hallways, the dancing that we get to watch when waiting for the elevators, or the inspiring art gallery that catches our eyes every time we step into the school. To all of you in the Fine and Performing Arts department, thank you for making the college so vibrant. Just as the artists in the school make us dream, the scientists push the limits of the possible and stimulate our imagination. The future businesswomen and men, future managers, future bankers of the Business department give us drive while keeping us grounded. Those of you in the Humanities department ask questions to keep us thinking for a lifetime. And all of you in the Social Sciences department are there to make sure that the world keeps on turning. Thank you all for teaching us through posters you regularly update in the hallways (yes, we do look at them!), through your presentations, and through your motivation. All of you have contributed to make Marymount what it is: a place where art and science come together to give its students a one-of-a-kind education. Art and Science go hand in hand, and although many universities have not realized this yet, Marymount is ahead of the game. The most successful women and men have both an artistic and scientific background. Einstein played the violin, President Clinton plays the saxophone, Natalie Portman got her bachelor's in psychology at Harvard, Mayim Bialik, also known as Blossom or Amy in The Big Bang Theory, has a PhD in neuroscience, and Brian May, the lead guitarist of Queen, has a PhD in astrophysics! So we can all thank Marymount Manhattan College for giving us the best kind of education: our teachers trained us to become creative thinkers.

Before we leave, let's remember to warmly thank our professors: thank you for inspiring us; let's remember to thank our president, President Shaver: thank you for your vision; let's remember to thank all of the staff at Marymount: thank you for making Marymount feel like home. And let's remember to thank our family and friends, those who are here today and those who aren't, but who have been there for us along the way: we could not have done it without you.

As we start to think about tomorrow, I have a favor to ask. Since there are so many wonderful singers in the audience, and since we are at Lincoln Center with amazing acoustics, I thought we should take advantage of being here to make some music together... If you will allow me, the little girl in me will always be thankful.

*Le soleil brille, au matin, Je suis prête a parier qu'au p'tit matin, il fera beau
Vive la lumière, du matin, qui efface mes problèmes et mes chagrins, un par un
When I'm stuck with a day, that's gray, and lonely
I just stick out my chin, and grin, and say, oh
The sun'll come out, tomorrow, so you gotta hang on 'til tomorrow
Come what may
Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love ya, tomorrow, you're only a day away
Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love ya, tomorrow, you're only a day away...*