



MarymountManhattan

Commencement

May 23, 2014

Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center
New York City

Senior Class Speaker: Ramshah Kanwal '14

I'm Ramshah Kanwal, and this is a bit of what I've seen of the world thus far; I was born in Sarai Alam Gir, Pakistan. I am from a place where the streets are loud, the samosa is spicy and although the language is Urdu, we are far more fluent in Bollywood.

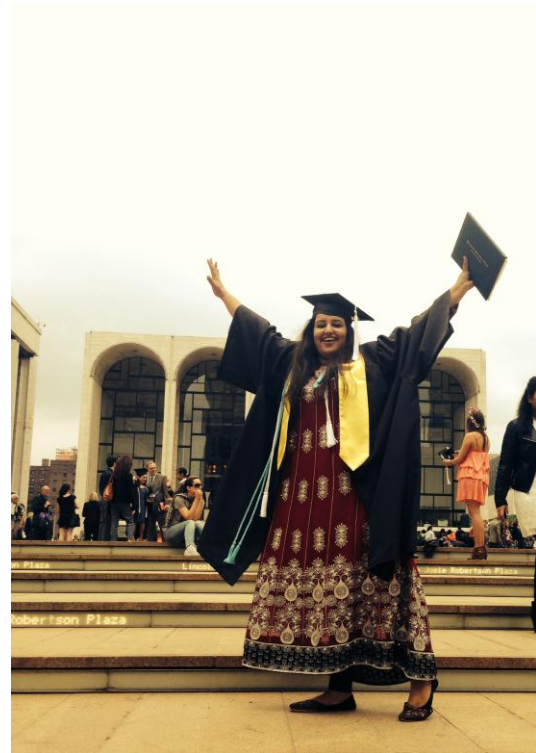
When I first moved to New York at 7 I didn't know this city would feel like the first time you hear your favorite song. I grew up in a neighborhood in Brooklyn where we sang the songs of manhunt, popsicles and football until our mothers yelled our name from the porch at dinner time. Then, one day when I was 12, a little bird dropped something on my shoulder and that luck followed me years later when I found Marymount Manhattan.

Which brings me to today at the 65th Commencement I am representing the Marymount Manhattan College class of 2014.

You may have seen one of us on the train, on our way to our internship, or on the busy streets of NY carrying a camera and tripod because we are Comm majors. We are the students who don't mind waiting in line for a Sandy or Shenel sandwich, no matter how long it takes. And although it's Starbucks now, we will always call it Peet's.

We are the Peer Leaders who bust our behinds to paint orientation with our spirits, we are the CAB officers, SGA and the Yearbook Club members who *will* photograph you with your mouth full of cheese, so be alert. And looking back, I can admit that there was a lot of pressure to fit in... into an elevator when class begins in 3 minutes.

We are the ones who finally realized that they're just acting majors rehearsing



and aren't actually fighting. I represent the commuters, the 55th street residents and the international students who chose MMC despite any of the 23 things Buzzfeed has to say about New Yorkers.

We are the ones who pick the perfect best friends, who pick up your tab at the café and pay for your fries. (Yes, Jean Flick, I'm looking at you.) We are the dance majors with the perfect hair buns... Who also create fire hazards by blocking hallways with their stretching. We are the Speech majors who provide clinic sessions for patients like Ramshah Kanwal who speak at the speed of light, and we are the Psychology majors, who have all had that moment in class where they are just like, "Oh my god, I think I'm schizophrenic!"

We are the ones who are still traumatized from the times the vending machine didn't have any more Reese's and most of us, were victims of professor Hunter's "Drugs and The Brain" class... my neurotransmitters are still recovering.

I represent all of the Workstudy students, who look forward to every other Thursday. Whether you work in Media Center, Academic Advisement or the office of Admissions—who can all admit to how difficult it'll be to find bosses as great as the ones we've had here. I hope my bosses, Jordan and David don't tell future employers that I often late and watched episodes of The office during my shift.

We go to a place also known as the Home of the Greatest Deans, there's Dean Carol Jackson who's colorful skirts turn heads and Dean Michael Salmon, who started at MMC as a grad assistant and now is the **highlight** of the Lower Level.

We wouldn't be who we are without the people we have met here--such as, our forever inspiring professors, the wonderful library staff, (including King of the Library, Jason Herman) and the amazing security officers who have seen us grow from the person in our ID photo to who we are today.

I am grateful for the person I have become over these four years. It has been made evident to me that education truly is a gift, its not like that turtle neck sweater you got for Christmas one year but it's the Barbie cash register you wanted. We can agree that college is a journey, and what would this journey be without the people who inspire us? For me, its my parents who left their home in Pakistan to raise their children in a land of opportunity, my older brother who made sure we always had the best Nintendo 64 games and young women such as Malala Yousafzai who make it evident that our most powerful weapon is education.

My hope for my peers is that we all continue to dream out loud and create and never even for second think that your dream isn't meant for you. Because when I moved here, the only English I knew was the first two lines of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" and today I am here, In front of you all, speaking a little more than a few lines And now I know, that everything is possible.

*humari filmon ki tarah humari zindagi mein bhi
end mein sab theek ho jaata hai. Happy Endings.
Aur agar theek na ho, to woh the end nabin hai dosto,
picture abhi baaki hai.*

For the 99% of you who didn't understand what I just said, let me translate, "Just like in our films, in the ends everything turns out alright, and if it isn't, then its not the end, the film isn't over yet my friend."

I'm Ramshah Kanwal, and this was what I've seen of the world thus far;
Graduates, may the elevators forever be empty for you.

Thank you.