

Barker Advises Students to Take Risks and Pay it Forward

By Jim Barker (cont.)

I'll be pushing 80 and won't give a hoot, but that's right about the time you all will reach middle age.

All of which is to say that the future you face is mind-blowing, invigorating, fun, serious and scary all at the same time, and that the pressing issues you will face are far more interesting and important than assigning you to a generational cohort.

So, how do you prepare for these things going forward?

I certainly don't have a big-picture clue beyond the certainty that step one has been accomplished here today. We are back to Berkeley. With what you have achieved in graduating from this institution, I cannot think of a group that is better prepared to move forward and confront the challenges of the future.

And by the way, isn't it interesting that I can say that, bonded to you across generational cohorts by the same Berkeley experience?

Second: Communicate Well and Respectfully – With Everyone

So much ink has been spilled in recent years on the polarized nature of many college campuses. Maybe this point is a bit provocative but I believe in free speech and a marketplace of ideas, and I've observed that not much gets accomplished, or understanding advanced, by simply shouting down opponents whose views you disagree with. A polite hearing out of any viewpoint is worthwhile – you can be as passionate as you want in dissent or response, but at least listen. You won't need trigger warnings or safe spaces if you are polite enough to at least engage with another viewpoint and push back respectfully if you disagree.

The other piece of this point is, don't discriminate in being polite. Get to know the names of everyone you meet on campus, from the janitor to the mail person to the work study

“Please take the time to. . . assist those seeking help or guidance, regardless of whether or not it's convenient or you are benefiting from it.”

And PS – you will fail along the way. Count on it. That's no reason to stop trying. As trite as it sounds, failure builds wisdom and character. As John Ruskin admonished, we should never “esteem smooth minuteness above shattered majesty.” Keep going.

Fourth (and cutting in the other direction): Don't Be Afraid of Doing Incremental Good

If you want to pursue a more conventional path – grad school, law school, med school – that's perfectly fine, too. Some people with great normative or artistic aspirations feel like guilty sellouts when they decide not to be a professional musician, or join the Peace Corps, or be a missionary in Africa. Get over it. You can still be a doctor and play music. My buddy Dr. David Hochberg is a world class urologist by day and a lead guitarist by night in the Little Kintner Boys, a local Tampa band. Go hear the music. Or go get examined. Dave's a one-stop shop.

I also would bet that at least a much net moral and social good is realized working within institutions to achieve particular public interest goals relative to defining oneself at the extreme. Our society needs people who are willing to do both things. But again, in the legal world, while I admire those who dedicate themselves to public interest law firms, for example, I am also extremely proud of the degree to which large law firms can and do step up to all kinds of pro bono work and civic engagement. You can still do plenty of good even if you choose a more established path. Don't feel guilty about it.

Fifth (finally): Pay It Forward

Class of 2018, if you remember nothing else about this talk, please remember this one, because it is huge. Please take the time to give of yourself, particularly if and when you have achieved a certain station in life, and assist those seeking help or guidance, regardless of whether or not it's convenient or you are benefiting from it.

You've no idea of the butterfly effects that can flow from something as simple as offering someone mentorship, meeting a student for coffee or an informational interview, or simply offering a piece of information to someone that may be helpful.

So two of my heroes in life are my parents. My father at one point led one of the largest family medi-

cal practices here in Tampa, which is how I came to be here. He and my Mom drove here in 1967 from Pennsylvania with two tiny kids, two hundred bucks in the bank, pulling a U-Haul trailer, so he could take a job offer after his internship.

But the event that sparked that fateful journey was a random act of kindness. My dad had been a pharmacist in Phillie before he was a doctor, and was headed toward a PhD in pharmacology. One random day, he accompanied his buddy to a med school admissions office so that the buddy could check on the status of his application. A friendly receptionist struck up a conversation with my father and told him that they had not yet filled the class. She encouraged him to apply. He did. Etcetera, etcetera. The result of a friendly receptionist's willingness to engage my chatty father caused a whole bunch of cascading collateral effects, including me ultimately standing before you today.

For my part, I am continually amazed at the degree to which four or five random acts of kindness radically affected aspects of my education, career trajectory and life. I never would have thought about theater or be a fan today without a Berkeley teacher randomly stopping me in the hall in 8th grade and encouraging me to audition for a school musical. I probably never would have gone to law school without my college advisor taking an interest in me and encouraging me to do so. I probably would not have clerked for a federal judge had a friend of a friend not graciously agreed to meet with me for coffee and recommend me. On and on.

Random acts of kindness and paying it forward.

So hear me now, Class of 2018. If it is within my power, I will help you. If you are ever through DC, I am glad to meet with you. I will take you for coffee, or buy you a drink when you're old enough, and I will share whatever insight I can about whatever you want to talk about.

Because who knows where it could lead?

Well, are we done here? Saareet told me I had about a couple of hours, but I think I'll give you back the time.

Congratulations, Class of 2018. I wish you all long and healthy lives and careers, as well as a terrific summer.



Isabella Schlaet

GOODBYES: (from left) Batia Friedman-Shaw '18, McKenna Ebert '18 and Seanna Mohan '18 hug and say their farewells.

As another aside, in preparing for today, I reviewed a bunch of commencement addresses. Some were stellar, some mediocre and boring, some should have been incinerated before delivery. But, interestingly, most were similar in structure – a mix of self-deprecating humor, some revelation of personal experience, a valuing of the school, and ending with some nuggets of wisdom.

So we're clear, I have no intention of doing anything different -- so let's conclude by getting on to the nuggets, shall we?

I do want to leave you with some observations and ideas gained from my own experience, some practical, and some bigger picture. I hope you find them useful.

First: Live College Well

I know all of you eventually are going to college, even if you take a gap year. Please take advantage of all that it has to offer. It really is one of the few times in your lives that you will have the unfettered ability to connect topics intellectually outside of a vocation. Travel if you can, engage with faculty – and of course take advantage of the social opportunities. But be all in, mindfully and in the moment.

student serving you hash in the dining hall. These human interactions have much to offer in their own right, but later, when you are working in an organization somewhere, with a staff and an infrastructure, you will find that treating everyone with respect no matter their station pays gigantic dividends in building loyalty and team play. I learned very quickly as a young lawyer that burning the midnight oil to produce the best-written brief in the world doesn't mean anything if it isn't filed on time. Building some good will with the messengers, secretaries and other staff is the right thing to do. It also can save your bacon.

Third: Don't Be Afraid to Go Big, Now

If you want to take a gap year, move to New York to act, be an entrepreneur, try to be a professional musician, work with orphans in Africa – go for it! If you can swing it financially, or work for it, do it. Now is the time. Life, family and health can and will intervene to close doors on your opportunities sooner than you'd think or like, so if you are inclined to put yourself out there and take a risk, don't wait.



Andre Armero

PERFORMING POET: Starring in Berkeley productions had equipped Andre with the necessary skills to dazzle a panel of judges while he presented his original poem.

Hallway Chronicles: Andre Armero
By Kendyl Kirtley

Q. What is your role as the Senior Class Poet, and how were you selected for this position?

A. It was originally an audition process, where you would write your own poem, and then present it as if you were speaking it in front of the entire class to a panel of judges. A few days later I was contacted and told that I was chosen for the class poet position. The poem is very much a culmination. It seeks to convey the whole sense of the class. The poem is supposed to embody the sentiments of the class and give a final send-off.

Q. Do you plan to incorporate writing into your future?

A. Surprisingly, I've always loved poetry and writing, but it's always been a hobby. It's never been something that I've actively pursued. If I'm really feeling inspired, I'll write something, but beyond that, I don't think I'll necessarily pursue it for a career. But I think writing will always be a part of what I do, and [since] I enjoy it, I don't think I could ever see myself completely giving up writing.

Q. What are your plans for college and beyond?

A. I'm heading into Northeastern up in Boston, and I'll be studying Biology because I'm crazy and I want to become a doctor. I think Ms. DeWeese is probably responsible for that.

Q. How has attending Berkeley shaped you as an individual?

A. I'm actually a lifer at Berkeley. I've been here since Pre-K. So I can say it's shaped me a lot. A lot of my personality, a lot of my character and attributes, have come from Berkeley. A lot of my friends [are from] Berkeley. As a whole, I think I've been shaped to become a better person and a strong student with a good work ethic because of Berkeley.

Q. Describe a memorable experience in your high school career.

A. It's definitely the musical. I've been in the musical all four years, and every single year it's so much hard work and once you get to the end of it you're like, "Wait, that was awesome." I love that. It's kind of sad to think that I'm not going to be here in the musical again, or part of the acting program here anymore. I definitely treasure those memories. I think that was a super great experience that I got to try.

Armero's Poem Treasures Berkeley Experiences

By Andre Armero
Class Poet

The Value is Unknown

You smell it before you see it,

The mad dash,

A panic as defined by many dictionaries,

People crowd the entrance.

All hoping, wishing in fact,

For only one thing,

Chicken tenders.

A small memory,

It occurs multiple times each year,

But the excitement never truly dies,

Even for the vegetarians who just enjoy

Watching the madness unfold before them.

I pocket the memory

Like a small coin,

Reminding myself to save it for later.

These moments and experiences happen every day.

As my high school experience comes to an unavoidable conclusion,

I've found myself breaking the whole experience

Into smaller, more memorable pieces.

Like little coins in a piggy bank,

They hold different values to me.

However, all of them hold some value.

A smile in the hallway,

A quiet joke shared between strangers,

The transition from stranger to acquaintance,

And then finally, acquaintance to friend.

Plink, plink, plink

The coins fill my pockets,

Weighing me down at times

As I fear the thought of having to give up

Many of the coins I already have



Catherine Amburgey

REMINISCENT READER: As the 2018 Class Poet, Andre Armero '18 revived the graduates' fond memories of Berkeley.

In exchange for newer ones.

But my pockets are infinite and deep down,

I know this.

Soon we will all move on to new places,

With even more coins to find and fill our proverbial piggy banks with.

Experiences discovered in the smallest nooks and crannies

On campuses across the world.

Memories we thought we forgot will stumble into our laps,

And maybe you'll be reminded of the coins sitting in your piggy bank.

Sometimes, you'll find old coins in new places,

A smile that catches you in the hallway takes you back,

Even if it's just for the smallest split second,

To the hallways of Berkeley,

Which may very well have been the moment you met your best friend.

Piggy bank is still there, sitting on a shelf,

Occasionally you pull out a few of the coins yourself

And you remember the times that have already occurred.

You let those memories fuel you.

A brief respite from the new and foreign world

Gives you the strength to go forward.

So I urge all of you to take stock,

Often times we lose count of the coins we have.

Some of us are so ready to begin the next chapter of our stories,

Some of us are ready to forget the piggy bank

We carry with us where ever we go.

I would highly recommend you don't though,

What may seem like one rain drop is a flood in large enough numbers.

These experiences may hold small value individually,

Though I think we can all agree when I say,

The entire experience is priceless.

The years we have spent at Berkeley,

The small experiences we have accrued,

Contribute to the whole value of it all.

A number somewhere close to infinity,

If not, beyond that.

Which may or may not be mathematically possible,

But for the purpose of literature and creative writing,

I'm willing to break a few fundamental rules

To express our gratitude for all that Berkeley has done for us

As well as our hopes for the future.



Andre Armero

MAKING MEMORIES: Andre Armero '18 spent his last year at Berkeley having a blast by traveling, being an active member on campus and taking on major roles in theater productions.

Nucci Suggests Class to Spend Summer with Family, Friends

By Alex Nucci
Student Forum President

I would like to welcome everyone as we come together one final time, and while I look around, I can tell that there are many different emotions flowing through both parents and students. Some of you may be sad to leave while others are excited to go. However, we will now take the opportunity to commemorate our achievements. First off, I would like us to take a moment to rejoice in the idea that we have crossed the finish line and after all the sweat and tears have been shed, we have finally made it. Because of this, I would like to say congratulations to you on everything you have done and accomplished while at Berkeley. However, you should not only pat yourself on the back, but also pat the backs of those who helped you along the way. A parent or mentor may be a good candidate for this and I advise you to thank them.

Now, as the excitement and joy of graduating leaves your mind and the fear and worry of leaving home begins to fill the void, I ask that you worry not about what could happen and instead worry about what should happen. I understand that some of you are moving very far away, which is scary, and it could happen that you make no friends causing you to have a horrible time. However, what should happen is that you enjoy yourself, at the college you picked out, to its fullest. Worrying about the possible negative outcomes does nothing but make it worse and I



Catherine Amburgey

WORRY NO MORE: Nucci says that worrying is unproductive and assures the class that they are prepared for college.

ask that if you experience any trepidation on your journey through college to remember a quote by Erma Bombeck: “Worrying is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do, but never gets you anywhere.” If you can remember that, I am certain that your time in college will go much more smoothly and that all of you will have an easier time succeeding.

If that is kept in mind, college will be a great time for all of us and even though it may bring worry and stress, we will all come out of this better and stronger as individuals.

Now, many see college and think of all the hard work and studying that they will have to do and it leads people to believe that college will just be one big ball of stress and no sleep. Yes, college can be tough, and yes, it can require lots of work, but again I tell you not to wor-

ry since we go to Berkeley Prep, as in college preparatory school. I have asked many Berkeley teachers about how much prepping Berkeley actually does, and time and time again I have been told that even if you feel like you are not ready, you are prepared much more than you think you are. I understand that college has lots of complex work, but we know how to study, we know how to manage our time, and we all go to a school whose overall goal is to prepare us for this very moment. I ask again, how much good can worrying bring? None. Do not focus on how you might fail, but rather focus on how you will succeed and all the wonderful different things that can happen on your path to success.

Similarly, many of you are going far away from home and some of you are even going to the other side of the coun-

try and beyond. Your parents are very sad to see you go and will miss you tremendously when you leave and you should spend as much time with them as you can. Do as many activities with them as possible before you leave since you may not be back for a very long time.

You should also try to enjoy the summer before you leave. If you spend your entire summer worrying about all the bad things that could go wrong, you will miss out on or be distracted from things that may give you joy. If you are constantly thinking about all the bad things that might happen, you will be unable to fully enjoy all the opportunities you are presented with before you leave.

This is the final time you may ever live with your parents and you do not want to risk wasting that time by spending it worrying rather than enjoying your time with them.

In conclusion, we are all going on the same journey, just getting there through a different path. Once we set out, it may be a long time before we return. So once again, spend your remaining time with your friends and family and cherish the time you have left with them before you go. Try your best to focus on the positives of what can and should happen when you go, instead of what negatives could happen. If you do that, I promise your experience before and during college will be much better overall. As Bombeck’s quote reminds us, why sit in a rocking chair, when you can be out gathering experiences to make your life full.

Sagheer Encourages Students to Step Out of Comfort Zone



Catherine Amburgey

TAKE THE RISK: Sagheer believes that people are happier if they step out of their comfort zone.

By Faizan Sagheer
Senior Class President

Teachers, faculty, guests, and of course, the Class of 2018: Today, we celebrate the dawn of a new beginning. A new beginning that seems scary, exciting, confusing and intimidating all at once. As each of you step across this stage and receive your diploma, we will all be entering a new world. A world where teachers will not keep reminding us to turn in that homework we forgot. A world where not everyone in our grade will know who we are. And most terrifying of all, a world where an 85 is not an A. Some of you right now are probably a whole lot more worried after I said that, but I assure you that each and every one of you has what it takes to succeed in college and in life.

Even though you all are more than prepared for college, I will

leave you with two pieces of advice. First, is a universal truth that I have found to be helpful in nearly every situation. Never stay in your comfort zone. You might be thinking, “What is so bad about being in my comfort zone? It’s so ... comfortable.” Unfortunately the more time you spend within that zone, the less happy you tend to be. Recent psychological studies have shown that the key ingredient to a happy life is progress, and you will never progress doing the same thing you have always done. When we push ourselves and take risks, we grow. We open doors to change, discover passions that otherwise would lay dormant, and push ourselves to our absolute limit. When we sit within our comfort zones, we settle.

When I decided to play the bagpipes as a freshman, I did not do it because I loved the melodious tone of a bagpipe- far from it. I did it to push myself, and at first, it made me uncom-

fortable. But as I continued to practice and grow as a player, that feeling of discomfort turned into pride.

Now, you’re probably thinking to yourself, “Ok Faizan, but how do I step out of my comfort zone.” Well, I’m glad you asked. Start by not procrastinating. I’m sure many of you just let out an audible groan, but hear me out. Just begin by doing small things that you’ve been putting off: mopping the floor, calling your grandma or setting up a dentist appointment. By performing the smaller tasks, you poke holes in your wall of procrastination, which will hopefully fall down by the time you begin college. Another great way to step out of your comfort zone is to meet new people. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did not change the very course of humanity by sitting with the same group of people every day. He engaged in conversations, respectfully, with people who had very different viewpoints than he did. He wasn’t worried about what people would think of him, but he still remained mindful of what he said. When you meet someone new, you gain a new perspective on life, and learn things you may not have otherwise. Whether it be talking about an opposing political view or simply which fast food is best (which is Taco Bell, by the way). Respectful discourse will always help you grow.

Second, is that no one cares about you. Actually, let me rephrase that. No one cares about you except your friends and family. It sounds harsh, but it’s true. No one cares about you nearly as much as you do, but this idea, once properly understood can be

a huge relief once you come to accept it. No longer will you have to worry about that time you said “you too” when the waiter said to enjoy your food, how bad that haircut you got at Wal-Mart looks or how many likes your Instagram post got. You will finally be free from the chains of social anxiety and judgment.

People around you are honestly just too busy or distracted to make you their primary focus. People especially don’t care about your Fortnite wins, so there’s no need to post them on Snapchat anymore. However, do not think that just because no one cares about you that you do not matter. You matter a great deal, it is simply time that you stop living for others and start living for yourself. Only you know what motivates you, only you know what your passions are, only you know what makes you happy and only you are capable of measuring these things. In short, nobody cares about you- and that’s great.

Class of 2018, let me reassure you one last time that no matter where you end up after all of this this, you will be fine. The skills you have learned over the years both inside and outside of the classroom will serve you well the next four years, and I urge you all to continue the great work you have started here. Always be risky, but never be reckless. Consciously plan your life, so circumstances don’t plan it for you. And most importantly, don’t forget about me when you become famous. In closing I just wanted to let you know that I am so proud of all of you, and it’s been an honor serving you these past four years.

Adelaide Casper Adams Southern Methodist University	JaVon Maliq Cooper Rhodes College	Michael Isaac Fruit University of Florida
Nathalie Elizabeth Adams University of Southern California	Harrison David Craythorne Florida State University	Emily Taylor Fuhrman University of Florida
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Addison Smith Aloian New York University	Caroline Grace Davidson Texas Christian University	Arjun Kumar Gandhi University of Maryland, College Park
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Cody Matthew Benjamin University of Notre Dame	Alexa Grace Fannon University of Florida	Jenna Hampton Pennsylvania State University
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Lindsay Ann Boushall Northeastern University	Mikael Bailey Forsmans Rollins College	Myles Vincent Hyatt Florida Gulf Coast University
Graham McKay Breeding Florida Atlantic University	Gaby S. Fraifer Univeristy of Toronto	Brayden Kash Jenkins University of Florida
Samantha Linsey Cascio Davidson College	Batia Friedman-Shaw Brown University	Paul Christopher Johan, Jr. University of Georgia

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Yale University

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Brian Edward Wexler
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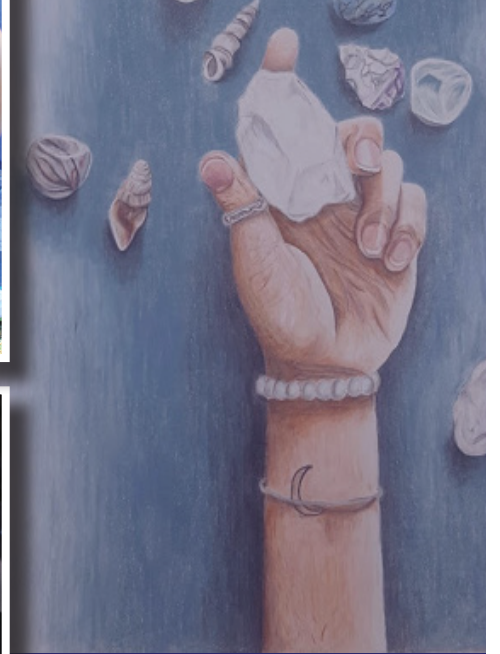
Sophie Jennifer Moss
Florida State University

Tristan Manshan Yang
Columbia University

The Senior Journey



Kindergarteners enjoy a picnic with their senior buddies.



The Baccalaureate service and dinner honor the senior class



Seniors sport their college t-shirts at the clap-out.



Anna Roman, Katie Crino and Addison Aloian performed "Count on Me" at this year's commencement ceremony.



The high school journey comes to a close at the commencement ceremony.



Justin Kuhn presented this year's class gift: a donation to the Students Helping Students Scholarship fund.