

Lasallian Commencement Address

May 1993

Presented by: Allison Beltramini

Brother James, Board of Trustees, distinguished guests, faculty, staff, parents and my

some point have experienced this, finding faith and religion right before a test ready for, or praying to the IBM God when the computer screen suddenly went blank, clearing a twenty page term paper due within the hour. In order to reach this moment in our lives, I think we have all seen faith work in mysterious ways.

Some of my most memorable and rewarding experiences have been doing service through Lewis. The best experience was a trip to Mexico in which I worked in a poverty stricken mission area. That opportunity changed my life in more ways than one. Not only did I meet my fiancée on that trip, but I also had the opportunity to work with people in teaching religion, taking a census, and worshipping with them. I would not have been afforded such a magnificent School. I know other students have had equally positive experiences serving the needy at the AIDS ministry of Illinois, the Daybreak homeless shelter, and in fact 8 students just left day to do community service in Appalachia.

The Lewis Community, as a whole, is a diverse one. And it is through this diversity that we are able to grow stronger. There are many smaller communities that contribute to student life here. The theater and fine arts department provide a sense of community in their various productions. With all their long hours spent working on play and recitals, how could they not grow together as a community?

The various athletic teams also are individual communities in which people work and compete together, and due to a freak blizzard in Florida over Spring Break, got to spend extra time bonding.

There are other aspects that contribute to community here at Lewis that we might take for granted. Think of how our time at Lewis would have been different if we could have had a different group of friends, a different set of faculty, staff and administrators. I cannot imagine being a resident assistant without the friendship of Rodney, Vivian, Evette, Tyrone, and Toni, the members of my staff. They have made some of the tough times that college life can bring a little easier. Thanks guys!

The quality of education at Lewis can be more fully appreciated now that we all have gone through the trying and challenging experiences of working toward our own personal degree built on desire, determination, and hard work. We often felt as if our efforts would be in vain. Yet, we are here today. We were all able to persevere and make it happen.

Thus, with the roots our parents have established, Lewis has strengthened us with and awareness of faith, service and community through quality education. In having the aviation program here at Lewis, it makes sense that this institution would also give us our wings. Just witness the Harold White Aviation Center under construction. This is just one example of how Lewis has helped to give us the wings we will need to soar through the rest of our lives. And, indeed, we have seen wings.