



**Remarks from the President of the Delbarton Alumni Association,
At the Hall of Honor Dinner at the Fine Arts Center, October 21, 2016**

I would like to welcome all of you here tonight – what a tremendous crowd -- we knew it would be for such distinguished honorees. My name is John Tonzola, and I am the President of the Delbarton Alumni Association. As President, I am also a member of the Hall of Honor Committee.

I'd like to use my time here tonight to speak about what the Delbarton Hall of Honor means to me. For me, Delbarton is many things, but above all Delbarton is a spiritual place that is made special by its history, its people and their stories. If you share this idea with me, then you feel it too when you set foot on campus this Homecoming weekend or whenever you encounter a fellow member of the Delbarton community. So for me, the Hall of Honor induction ceremony is not only a great tribute to the few, but it is also a cause for celebration for the many. And so tonight is a celebration for all of us, of three exceptional people in Delbarton history who through their actions and the way they lead their lives are exemplary of what is best about Delbarton.

Some time ago, before I really knew what Delbarton was about, I knew a little something about the people at Delbarton thanks to my older sisters – at Oak Knoll at the time -- and my “future” brother-in-law Mark Ferriso from the class of 1990, and his brother Brian from the class of ‘84.

But even before that, I remember a time as a kid growing up in Westfield standing at Tamaques Park – with my fellow lax rat, Kevin McLane ‘94 – watching the Westfield Blue Devils lacrosse team take on this Green team from the “town of Delbarton”. I did not know what Delbarton was or where it was, and I certainly did not know what made it special.

By the time I set foot on campus as a Lifer in 1989, I was starting to get the idea. By then, I knew about a monk named Fr. Giles '56 who travelled with Delbarton students to Appalachia every year to help the less fortunate residents of Magoffin County, Kentucky by them bringing clothing, toys and food. I had also heard about a young standout on the ice hockey team named Derek Maguire '90 who checked an opposing player through the boards, and scored the game-winning goal in the state semifinal vs. St. Joe's as a freshman. I also learned about Fr. Peter teaching his 7th and 8th grade students everything about American Civil War history during their middle school Math classes. I heard about a young monk named Br. Paul, who taught German and had a great love of photography...as well as a love of writing on the cars of Students who parked where they were not supposed to; and I came to hear about an Alum whose love of

his alma mater led him back to Delbarton after college to teach and to coach lacrosse – the coach who I happened to see at that lacrosse game in Westfield a few years back. I remember thinking to myself: this place is different, this place is special.

As the years go by, we hear about the achievements of Delbarton students, and we hear about the stats: the SAT scores, the National Merit Scholars, the AP Exams, the State Championships, the annual list of colleges that Delbarton students attend each year, AND these things are both important and absolutely something of which to be proud as members of the Delbarton community. From an outsider's perspective, these are the things that Delbarton is all about. But what we know on the inside is that: this is not what Delbarton is about. Inside these walls, on this campus and on our Green lawns tomorrow we know that what makes Delbarton the special place that it has always been, is without question our people. It is our people who keep us coming back home every year on this Homecoming weekend.

And so, tonight is an opportunity for us to hear about three very special people who have graced Delbarton's campus and its history. And tonight is a celebration. As you listen, allow yourself to reminisce about how these people touched your lives, or simply how their story reminds you of something in your experience that makes Delbarton what it is to you.

Every year, I come back home to Delbarton and the Hall of Honor Dinner and I look forward to sitting in the audience and listening to the stories of extraordinary people who made Delbarton what it is today, and I hope that all of you do too.

John Tonzola '95

*President, Delbarton Alumni Association
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