



Remarks from the President-elect of the Delbarton Alumni Association,
at the Alumni Annual Meeting and Pig Roast on June 1, 2016.

"For me, it is noteworthy to be elected as next President of the Delbarton Alumni Association during what may be described as an eye-opening and even frightening referendum of an election year for our nation. I will take this opportunity to reflect upon the idea of LEADERSHIP.

For all Delbarton Alumni, we have just experienced what could be described as a Golden Age for the School, for our Association itself and not least of all for the leadership of the Alumni Board...culminating in the celebration of the school's 75th Anniversary and the presidency of Jerry Jabbour. **From a seed of an idea, the Delbarton Alumni**

Association has grown these past 75 years into a body of over 5,000 alumni strong with widespread support across the globe, active chapters throughout the country and participation that is the envy of our peers.

For this Alumni Board the pieces fell into place as Jerry took the helm in 2014 with his energetic leadership style and his unparalleled gift of oratory, which has been inspiring to every one of us who have served with him. For the past two years, Jerry has embodied a tour de force of leadership for each of us who has had the privilege to hear him speak, to attend a meeting over which he has presided, or to witness the work that he does on behalf of this school which he loves so dearly.

We began in July 2014 with a dinner at Rod's to which Jerry assembled ALL of the past Presidents of the Alumni Board, and at which he laid out his vision for the years ahead while inviting the past Presidents to weigh in and contribute their perspectives from years gone by. This dinner meeting was followed shortly thereafter by possibly a first-ever: FULLY ATTENDED board meetings in both July and August. Everybody was there...everybody was motivated to do their part to serve the school. In truth, it did not take much. Jerry's leadership skills honed as a Captain of his Delbarton soccer and basketball teams, continued today as a leader and prominent speaker in the business world, as an energetic youth athletic Coach and as a deeply spiritual person was more than enough to mobilize the Alumni Board he had assembled under his watch.

You see – we have a belief amongst the members of the Alumni Board that we have “the easiest job in the world” because – not only do we have a great product – but all Delbarton Alums are so capable, and each of us are leaders. As an Alumni Board, it is not hard to lead an Association made up of men who are themselves driven to serve and to succeed, and also who

understand what it means to lead. Most young men come to Delbarton as leaders, all of us graduate as leaders...at Delbarton... we learn what it means to lead and what it takes to be resolute in our beliefs, to have a strong voice, and to serve. ***This is what Delbarton teaches us.***

And we are inspired to lead; because Delbarton makes us feel that we are a part of something greater than ourselves, something that makes us greater than we can be on our own. To this end, we have another saying in the Alumni Association which we strive to remember at every Board meeting and event, "***we stand on the shoulders of Giants.***" We are motivated by those Alumni who came before us and the foundation they built. We are also motivated by the lessons of the Monks and teachers who have mentored and educated all of us. We have heard Br. Paul speak over these past years regarding the Monks of St. Mary's Abbey who founded Delbarton School, and specifically the "CAN DO" attitude of these founding fathers. It is their words and deeds upon which the school was founded; and it is today's Monks, as well as the teachers, current students and Alumni who are charged with keeping these words and deeds alive as we look forward to the next 75 years.

The President of Harvard University, Drew Faust, recently spoke at the 214th commencement of the United States Military Academy at West Point. What she had to say was moving for me and appropriate not only in this election year for our nation, but also in the wake of the 75th anniversary of Delbarton School, as we reflect upon our proud history and look forward with bright eyes to our future as a School and as an Alumni Association.

President Faust chose to focus her remarks to the cadets on the importance of words and deeds; of oratory, and the role of liberal arts and the humanities in developing and honing leadership qualities in young people. She focuses upon this theme at a time when the current election in our country and many of today's politicians point to the problem of growing student loan debt, and speak of how the world needs "more welders and fewer philosophers," and at a time when nationwide universities on average have seen the fewest graduates in humanities in our history; ***and most directly to her point*** at a time when perhaps the greatest institution dedicated to the production of tomorrow's leaders – West Point – increases its offerings in the humanities. The premise is that the study of humanities, liberal arts and languages is what provides a young person with the requisite skills to be a leader, to draw from history and experience, and to be creative and thoughtful in times of crisis or challenge, when leadership is most needed. **And of course, those generations of leaders from West Point form the long, gray line.**

There are important parallels for us in what President Faust describes occurring at West Point, and what we have on this hilltop at Delbarton School. Our education is steeped in the centuries-old Benedictine principles which the Monks teach to us and we keep alive; our experience here at the school includes the study of Latin, the study of languages, of how to relate; our curriculum emphasizes literature, philosophy, religions of the world, music, art and history. We are focused on the humanities and liberal arts at a time when the world may be calling into question the practicality of it all, while talking-heads analyze economic data and

employment reports. And I believe, Delbarton men – in the same tradition as West Point – are the leaders of tomorrow.

We come together as an Alumni Association in part because one generation inspires the next. We share so much of the same education and experience at Delbarton, and we go off in to the world to make the most of this education as leaders in our fields, to serve our communities and we return to Delbarton to serve our school. We look to those who came before us for guidance and inspiration. The young men amongst us today, the younger Alums aspire to be leaders, to grow to be good men and in many ways look to the older Alums here today and all over the world as role models of what they may become. But here's a little secret, the older alums here today (and I speak for myself) are inspired by the young men at Delbarton right now, by the young alums who have recently graduated and are here with us tonight...for all that you accomplish, that we read about and see, and that you have before you yet to do. We are inspired by you and the success we know you will achieve, and the service we know you will continue. As Alumni, our common experience is what ties us together.

As Father Giles taught us, "you can never plateau; you can never stop climbing..." I think this is a lesson for every one of us as Delbarton Alumni, and as men...that goes well beyond the walls of Delbarton School. This is also a lesson for the Alumni Association. As Delbarton Alums, we push each other in what we do every day. We are inspired by each other, and through our hard work, good deeds, and service we hope to inspire others around us beyond the Delbarton community.

I may be the President for the next two years, but in the blink of an eye I will be another past President. More importantly, I am a Steward of what has gone before me, and of what -- together -- we will all continue for the next 75 years. As our Delbarton experience has taught us: it is words and deeds that inspire...words and deeds that define leadership...and it is our words and our deeds that will lead us to face tomorrow's challenge.

And together as Delbarton brothers, we all form the long, Green line..."

John Tonzola '95
President, Delbarton Alumni Association
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