



Faith and Learning Scholar Community
Dinner Dialogue 4
Recognition of Graduating Scholars and Faculty
Mentors

March 19, 2024

Commencement Address
by Maya Angelou

Letter To My Daughter
Random House: New York
2008

Commencement Address

*And now the work begins
And now the joy begins
Now the years of preparation
Of tedious study and
Exciting learning
are explained.*

*The jumble of words and
Tangle of great and small ideas
Begin to take order and
This morning you can see
A small portion of the large
Plan of your futures.*

*Your hours of application,
The hopes of your parents,
And the labor of your instructors*

*Have all brought this moment
Into your hands.*

*Today, you are princesses and princes
Of the morning.
Ladies and Lords of the summer
You have shown the most
Remarkable of all virtues
For today as you sit
Wrapped in earned robes,
Literally or figuratively,
I see you filled with courage.
For although you might all
Be bright, intellectually astute,
You have had to use courage
To arrive at this moment.
You may be,*

*As you are often described,
Privileged, which of course means
Wealthy, or you have been born into an ongoing struggle with
need.
In either case, you have had to develop
An outstanding courage to
Invent this moment.*

*Of all your attributes, youth,
Beauty, wit, kindness, mercy,
Courage is your greatest
Achievement,*

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

*For you, without it, can practice no other
Virtue with consistency.*

*And now that you have shown
That you are capable of manufacturing
That most wondrous virtue,*

You must be asking yourselves,

*What you will do with it.
Be assured that question
Is in the minds of your
Elders, your parents, and strangers
Who do not know your names,
Your fellow students who
Next year, or in the years to come
Will sit, robed and capped
Where you sit today,
And will ask the question
What will you do?
There is an African adage*

Which fits your situation.

*It is, "The trouble for the
Thief is not how to steal the Chief's
Bugle, but where to play it."*

*Are you prepared to work
To make this country, our country
More than it is today?*

MAYA ANGELOU

*For that is the job to be done.
That is the reason you have
Worked hard, your sacrifices
Of energy and time,
The monies of your parents
Or of government have been paid
So that you can transform your
Country and your world.*

*Look beyond your tasseled caps
And you will see injustice.
At the end of your fingertips
You will find cruelties,
Irrational hate, bedrock sorrow
And terrifying loneliness.
There is your work.*

*Make a difference
Use this degree which you
Have earned to increase
Virtue in your world.*

*Your people, all people,
Are hoping that you are
The ones to do so.*

*The order is large,
The need immense.
But you can take heart.
For you know that you*

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

*Have already shown courage.
And keep in mind
One person, with good purpose,
can, constitute the majority.
Since life is our most precious gift
And since it is given to us to live but once,
Let us so live that we will not regret
Years of uselessness and inertia*

*You will be surprised that in time
The days of single-minded research
And the nights of crippling, cramming
Will be forgotten.*

*You will be surprised that these years of
Sleepless nights and months of uneasy
Days will be rolled into
An altering event called the
"Good old days." And you will not
Be able to visit them even with an invitation
Since that is so you must face your presence.
You are prepared
Go out and transform your world*

*Welcome to your graduation.
Congratulations*