

Lasallian Commencement Address

May 1996

Presented by: Sharon O Connell

Members of the Board of Trustees, Br. James, Members of the Faculty, Administrators, Family, Friends, and most especially, my fellow graduates.

I'd like to begin by pointing out that this ceremony celebrates elements that are both very new and very old. Sitting in this brand new recreation facility, we are reminded of Lewis' growth, potential and future. Dressed in these rather peculiar costumes, long black gowns and pointy boards with swaying tassels for hats, we experience traditions which have long celebrated the completion of academic programs.

Each of us is also celebrating new and old elements in our own lives. None of us is exactly the same as that first day we came to this University to earn a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Yet there is much within each of us that has held steady throughout the years. In being here today we announce to the world that we have cherished an education based upon solid values. Not all of us can name those values precisely, but we know they have been operating in our lives.

I have identified them with the Lasallian values of faith, knowledge, fidelity, wisdom, justice and association. And I can best speak of these values through personal experience. While I reflect on these values alive in my life, I invite you to reflect on the impact these values have had on your own life.

As I look out on the 450 individuals who make up the graduating class of 1996, I see many friends made during these past four years. I shared so many laughs, tears, hopes and fears with them. They were there when I took on a double major and a minor. They were there when my life as a Resident Assistant seemed almost unbearable. They were there as we tried to re-create the student government system.

Life is experiences like these which have taught me the meaning of Lewis' Lasallian values: faith, knowledge, fidelity, wisdom, justice, and association. These values have well been made real for me by friends, family, professors and mentors.

There are others who were very important to us, but they are not here today- at least not in body. I probably would not be standing here about to receive my Bachelors of Arts in History without the urging of my grandpa O'Connell whose love of history and whose s