

Thank you. President Wendy Raymond; Members of the Class of 2023; friends, family, guests ...I am grateful for your recognition of a lifelong interest in education; for what my sister, my children, my grandchildren, and a wide circle of friends now call the family business.

I've always wanted a Haverford College degree. Let me explain.

In the 1950's, as I grew up in Philadelphia, I came to understand and appreciate the distinction of Quaker education. I entered Germantown Friends School as a third grader, and ten years later I graduated in 1958.

The prelude to my GFS career began one day in the spring of 1948. In my neighborhood public school, my best friend and I made the mistake of telling the teacher that we had read ahead in the reader; in fact we'd finished the book. Since the books in the storage closet were very dusty, the teacher suggested we clean them, and she gave us a few cloths to do the job while the other children finished the lesson.

Years later I asked my son, an historian, if knowledge of the slavery codes might have fueled my parents' anger. No doubt, he replied.

I loved GFS, my new friends, the classes, the teachers, the sports, the Quaker camps, the other Quaker Schools that I came to know. By the time we reached the upper school, my friends and I had plenty of ideas about how to choose a college.

In seventh grade, Henry Scattergood, HC '27 was my U.S. history teacher. By the way, that was 1952-53, the year that Eisenhower was elected President. Here is a memorable discussion topic for twelve year-olds: "My country right or wrong" or "My country is always right".

David Mallery, HC '45 my English teacher in eighth grade, and then again in eleventh, was also my college advisor. At our first meeting he asked me what ideas I had about college. I replied, "Oh, one of the Seven Sisters, I guess. "I think you should look at Sarah Lawrence" he said and handed me a catalogue. I read it, and I was hooked.

Mind you, Sarah Lawrence College and Haverford College in 1958 were quite similar in size, in location, and in commitment to progressive education; one was for women, one for men. So off I went to Bronxville, New York and four more years of observation, reflection, and experience. And of course, I stayed in touch with friends from Germantown Friends, and the Farm and Wilderness Camps, and Haverford College, including Tom Kessinger, HC'63; (Haverford College President 1988 - 1996.) You get the idea!

Irvin Poley HC'12, (*1912 that is*), was my ninth grade English teacher; in twelfth grade seniors all took public speaking and participated in the Malvern Festival of short plays in the spring term. Mr. Poley had long been Vice-Principal of the school; he retired in 1958 after 45 years of teaching and administration. That year was my graduation year and he was our Commencement Speaker. He regaled us with stories of school at the beginning of the twentieth century, and theater, and public speaking.

He also told us that at his high school graduation, in 1908, the speaker, after a long rant had proclaimed:

"If you remember nothing else, remember this...

But, as you might imagine, those were the only 7 words Mr Poley remembered.

I live in Philadelphia, not far from Independence Historical Park, a pleasant place to walk in Old City Philadelphia. In the park, near Carpenter's Hall just south of Chestnut Street, there are two markers. One is titled *Quaker Meeting Site*, the other, *Quaker School Site* reads:

In schools like the one that stood here in the 1700s Quaker teachers educated all children and servants —male and female, black and white.

Although Quaker influence over city and state politics declined steadily in the 18th century, their influence in education remained significant.”

I dare say that is still true today - influence that belies the numbers.

Members of the Haverford College Class of 2023, I thank you for including me in this celebration of your achievements. I am confident that your education, rooted in Friends' principles, especially honoring the light in every person, continuing revelation, and commitment to social justice, bodes well for generations to come.

