

THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

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PALMARIUM

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Last year our seven TCA schools raised over \$86,000 for the **American Cancer Society**. What an accomplishment! This year each of our schools will focus their primary fundraising effort on **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital** based in Memphis, TN. Their mission statement is as follows: "The mission of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. Consistent with the vision of our founder, Danny Thomas, no child is denied treatment based on race, religion or a family's ability to pay." Page six has a link to contribute, and also look for communications from your school principal during the year.



Titan of the Year 2022-23

On August 10, 2023 - as staff returned to to start prepping for the new school year and hear from our new TCA President, Robert Thomason, we also celebrated **Erin Yeadon** as she was named the 2022-23 recipient of the **Titan of the Year** award.



Erin has served TCA as a 1st grade teacher at North Elementary for the past six years. In nominating Erin - one parent wrote: "Mrs. Yeadon radiates light and goodness. Every day, every moment she is so very passionate about life and teaching. She is an excellent role model for our teachers, our students, and anyone who has the honor of meet-

ing her. My child grew leaps and bounds with confidence because of her and the phenomenal way in which she unites the classroom." The Titan of the Year video can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

Mrs. Yeadon is so deserving of this great honor and we are thankful she is a part of our Titan family.

In this month's issue you will find an article from our new TCA President, **Dr. Robert Thomason**. Additionally, details are provided on the upcoming *Beyond the Book Club* studies, the graduation addresses from this past year, the 2022-2023 Titan of the Year recipient, and recent *U.S. News & World Report* accolades for our High School.

The Editor

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SEVEN SCHOOLS • THREE CAMPUSES • ONE VISION

Teaching Kids *How to Be, Not What to Be*



Rankings

U.S. News & World Report

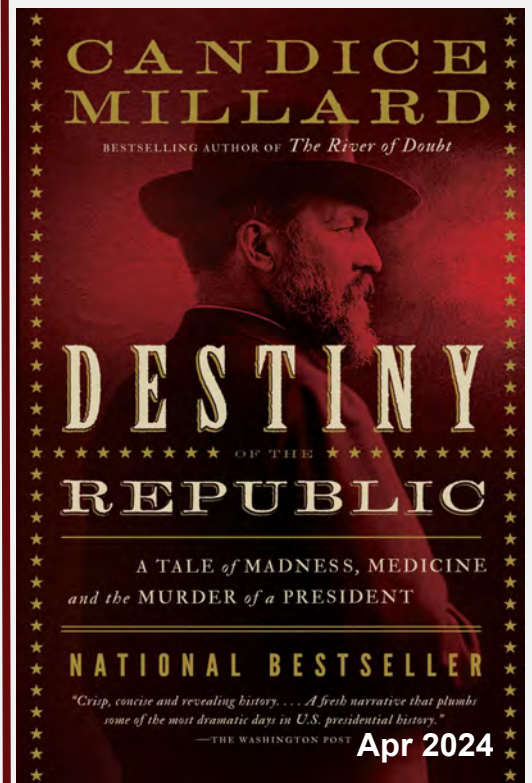
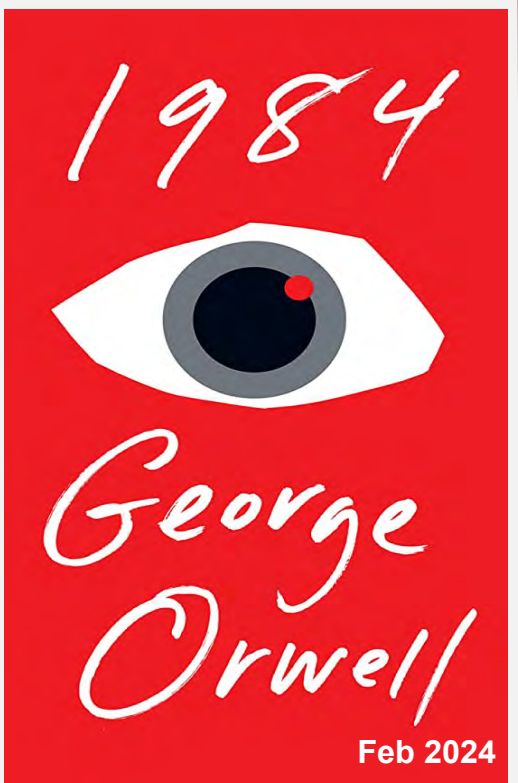
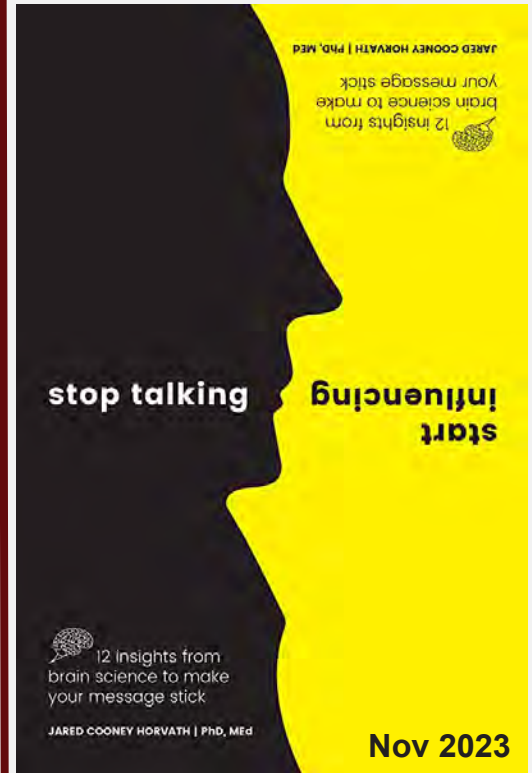
Each year **U.S. News & World Report** releases a ranking of the top high schools in the nation. The 2023-24 results were just released last month after an analysis of 25,000 high schools. **TCA's High School** was ranked the **#1** school in District 20, the **#2** high school in Colorado Springs, and the **#19** school in Colorado. On the nationwide level the rankings placed our High School as the **#124** charter school in the nation and the overall **#611** ranked high school in the country. Those rankings equate to our high school placing in the **top 2.5%** of all high schools nationwide. Such results do not happen without the great contributions of our parents, students, and staff across all grade levels. Thanks to everyone that made this possible. *Note:* Since College Pathways does not offer AP courses (but instead PPSC courses) it is not considered for the full rankings.



click image above for link

Engaging Minds: Beyond the Book Club

2023-24 marks the ninth year of our *Engaging Minds: Beyond the Book Club* effort at TCA. We have covered many different titles during that time-frame and after completing *Rescuing Socrates: How the Great Books Changed My Life and Why They Matter for a New Generation* during the month of September, we have three titles remaining for this school year. Up next, in November (shown to the right), is *Stop Talking, Start Influencing: 12 Insights from Brain Science to Make Your Message Stick* (a very popular selection this year). Additionally, shown below are the selections for February and April 2024. If you'd like to join us for one of the studies send an e-mail to me at wjolly@asd20.org and I will add you to the RSVP request list that goes out around three weeks before the book study dates. We meet for 90-minutes in the North Elementary Library (Pikes Peak Room) from 4:30-6:00 pm on the selected dates.



SELECTIONS 2023-2024

To the TCA Family,

In my grandmother's front yard in Oklahoma, there is a pecan tree. I remember when my step-grandfather planted it as a small sapling in the early 1980s. I jumped out of the car at Grandma and Grandpa's and thought that someone had shoved a five-foot stick into the ground. As I recall, I had the notion that this "stick" would have made a great sword for me to fight with my two younger brothers; however, Grandpa Baker made sure that I knew it was a tree and that I should not touch it. He continually watered, fertilized, and cared for that tree. When he passed away in the late 1990s, the tree had grown to a decent size, but it was not yet climbable.

After my grandmother passed in 2017, my son, Trae and I were standing in her front yard. I noticed that the pecan tree had become much broader and was around 30-35 feet tall but still maturing. I asked Trae, "How old do you think that tree is?" He pondered the question for a moment. "Dad, it is probably around 15 years old." I smiled. "Son, that tree is nearly 40." Trae, scrunched his nose with some incredulity, "How can that tree be almost 40 years old!? The tree in our front yard is taller than that, and it is only 18 years old."

"Trae, the tree in our front yard is called a Green Ash and its wood is relatively soft. Soft woods can grow fast. They get big, but their wood can lack durability. Plus, they don't weather storms particularly well." He looked at the pecan tree while I continued, "This one is in the hickory family, and it is classified as a hard wood. Hard woods are made of tougher stuff." Trae's eyebrows rose as he turned back to me. He was beginning to process the difference. "And that is why they grow so slowly?" I nodded, "Yes. It takes time to make something

that lasts. This tree can withstand the hardships that come with difficult weather. Its wood is of higher quality and very valuable."

Not long after this exchange, we sold Grandma Baker's home. Even though I no longer visit her place, I am certain that pecan tree still stands in the yard, growing stronger with each passing year.

TCA is a lot like Grandpa Baker's pecan tree. Our founders found fertile soil when they planted the idea of TCA in the Colorado Springs community. We grew from a village of portables with a dirt parking lot into three campuses and seven schools. It has taken 25 years, but those men and women provided the kind of nurturing that allowed TCA to flourish toward maturity and they passed those responsibilities into capable hands.

Grandpa Baker's Pecan Tree



I am thankful that TCA's founders provided a firm foundation. The mission statement they crafted gave us direction in carrying out our purpose. Crafted a little over a decade later, our Core Values codified the oral traditions of the school, which led to the development of our Titan's Creed. This triad of thought and philosophy has created a guide for our school. They are a road map that ensures our journey into the future will remain consistent with our past.

Our solid foundation has sprouted into our successful present. In fact, TCA is in a tremendous position. Our academics, athletics, and activities remain strong, some of the strongest in our district, and we are in one of the best districts in Colorado. Our philosophy, staff, and parent community foster that type of success. Our students are learning from some of the best teachers and coaches in the state. Our people are talented. They work hard. They are kind. They are student oriented. Our parents care deeply for their children's education, often going the extra mile, and we are thankful for their sacrifice of time, talent, and treasure. We have witnessed it yet again at the beginning of another great school year and I am deeply grateful for it.

As I look forward, I am excited for our students. The fruit of their future is promising. The education that each one receives at TCA is unique and valuable. The thought and philosophical structure that undergirds everything our staff and faculty do, reinforces the character lessons they learn in the classroom. Our focus on character development and cultivating a love of learning creates a rhythm and purpose that sets TCA apart.

We want to prepare our students for their next chapter. The world can be a difficult place, yet it is also a place full of promise and opportunity. Those promises and opportunities can be realized if our students are ready. I intend for them to walk out of our building, with a diploma in hand, equipped with a passion for learning and having cultivated an ability to think critically. I want them to stand up for those things in our world that are true, beautiful, and good, and do so with virtuous character. I hope our graduates sit in seats of influence as exemplary citizens and lead our world toward a better future. This is the vision to which our founders hoped and our world needs.

Recently, I was in downtown Colorado Springs at Good Neighbors Meeting House, grabbing a cup of coffee with a friend. Scrawled across the wall was this sentence, "Things of quality have no fear of time." The quote resonated with me. The educational landscape today is different than it was 25 years ago, but our mission remains the same. With dedication to our mission, philosophy, and Core Values, **TCA, much like my grandpa's pecan tree, will only strengthen with the passage of time.** As a result, the proverbial shade from the TCA tree will grow larger in our community and world.

-Robert Thomason



Thank you so much for the honor of speaking to you tonight. To the 46 of you I didn't teach, I sort of feel like I know you anyway (using my microwave, or getting tea or something), and I thank you for still listening.

From what I can tell about graduation speeches, I'm supposed to acknowledge your hard work to get here, and then inspire you to go forward working even harder; to somehow hype you up for the rat race ahead and the bicep-building thrill of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. But TCA is a little weird, and so are the people who work here. We don't want you to simply work hard. We're far more interested in the type of work you're doing, and in who you are. I don't want to discourage you, but you're not really done yet. The harder work of being human has just begun.

We say TCA exists to assist parents in helping you become exemplary citizens. We don't say we want you to be excellent achievers, or useful members of society, and decidedly not to be prepared for the technology of the future. Being a citizen means being connected to others, to a cause that's bigger than your own individual accomplishments - and to be exemplary, remember, does not mean to be without flaws, but to strive to be an example. In our Core Values document, there is a detailed definition of an exemplary citizen and specifically the type of work exemplary citizens try to do. The direct quote is, **exemplary citizens "seek to produce fruitful work."** "Producing fruitful work" is an incredibly purposeful phrase, unlike the phrase "perfect work," which is a potentially poisonous one, or "useful work" a potentially dehumanizing one. In fact the whole core values document is built on an organic metaphor of roots, branches, etc. So why do those small word choices matter?

Let's explore the connotations of the word "fruitful" for a moment. I'm an English teacher, so don't be surprised this is happening. It brings to mind buds and blossoms, potential just realized, the delicate fragrance of oranges in the night air. "Fruitful" is also a somewhat soft-seeming symbol, though, not an image of absolute strength. After all, fruit is somewhat fragile. Who among us hasn't seen a crushed rind fallen to the ground, and felt a bit sad. Why wouldn't we ask for something more sturdy?

When I was your age, sitting in your seat, I wasn't interested in the idea of fruitful work. I was already nearly paralyzed by perfect work. My parents never pushed me academically or personally, and I wasn't in nearly the high-pressure environment TCA can be. I just sort of entered the world fearing my smallest failure would largely define me. In fact, my mom told me once in early elementary school, I burst into tears in the middle of choir practice. Afterwards, when my teacher finally calmed me down from my hysterical sobs and asked me what had happened, assuming some peer had pinched me or something, I choked out, "I sang the wrong note!" Of course I did - I was six! And what a tragedy - because of that false hope of perfection, I couldn't see the beauty that my squeaky little voice was a part of, not in spite of, but actually BECAUSE of its imperfection.



Needless to say, this did not bode well for my future academic career, or general happiness. I worked as hard as I could and yet couldn't be proud of my efforts because of the grade on the paper, or my comparison to my more-talented peers. One might say these efforts were like a leaky jar, that could not hold water. I still struggle, wondering if I've done enough, to feel like I have to "earn" my rest or prove my worth. Sound familiar?

I know many of you are not burdened by academic perfectionism, despite the pressures, and I'm so very glad. But every single one of you fears failure, because you're human, even standing here on the threshold of one of your great successes. Every one of us, even the most confident adults in your life, even Mr. Mueh or Mr. Shields has feared being judged and found wanting, or losing their sense of purpose. Even while you're celebrating, a small voice might be asking somewhere, what if I don't fulfill my potential after graduation? What if I disappoint my parents? But fearing imperfection actually poisons your potential. It doesn't produce it.

To expect perfect work from yourself, or from others, will not make you an exemplary citizen or help you live the good life. Expecting perfect work is hubris, dooming yourself to endless toil, when humans are made to try and fail, to learn and grow, and to sing with others, however squeakily. Expecting perfect work sacrifices a stroll with someone you love for a series of ever-heavier boulders to roll up-hill in Sisyphean succession. Of course, you can and should strive for excellence - but if you shortcut your humanity for the world's shallow stamp of approval, you're probably not doing fruitful work, but fast work. In a world where an AI can write an essay or make "art", can you be human enough to try and sometimes fail to find your own words, to sing the wrong notes, to mix the paint yourself, smearing it upon the canvas? In a world where social media wants you to constantly appear perfect, can you choose instead to be good, behind the scenes? In a world trying to drag you towards apathy and anxiety, can you seek instead passion and peace? Can you bravely love someone so much your heart can break and your hopes can fail instead of self-protection? Can you seek fruitful work and see what it will yield?

The core values of TCA also do not say exemplary citizens “seek to produce useful work.” There’s nothing wrong with useful work necessarily, and I know some of you in years to come will grumble about how we didn’t have shop class, or teach you how to file your taxes, or did not teach you about ...other things - like how to change a tire! Some of you have felt frustrated that you might never “use” Latin, the quadratic equation or ever need to read a Russian novel in the “real world.” And the truth is, your education has not prepared you for real life, and I don’t think that adding a welding class to TCA would change that, even if it would be fun. The most important, difficult and wonderful things in life are impossible to truly prepare for: No curriculum can prepare you for grief, no quiz can teach you how to pursue what is good, beautiful and true, and financial literacy alone cannot help you find your calling. The world is obsessed with the concept of that which will be useful, and useful work can be good, but utility is not the same as purpose. We can’t teach you everything you ever need to know that might be useful to you. So instead, at TCA we’ve given you tools and training to understand and seek good, to be good, and to do good, long after you’ve forgotten the many facts and habits which created that capability. You can and will be useful to others - but your value is not determined only by being of use, and nor is the value of this classical education.

So let’s return to the image of the fruitful work, that frail, finite image. Even seemingly ruined, plants contain those tiny symbols of something more than themselves: seeds. It might not be the next day, or even the next month - but the fruitful work that sometimes seems dead on the ground sprouts into tiny green curling tendrils of hope, reborn. What seemed like only a momentary, imperfect blossoming, is part of a much larger

life cycle. There isn’t much room for ego or easy praise in fruitful work, and not a lot of speed. Plant metaphors rarely symbolize efficiency. But they do represent the beauty of becoming.

My favorite medieval writer (because everyone should have one of those) is the wonderful botanist, musician, and writer Hildegard of Bingen. Her vivid vision of virtue was so unique she had to create her own word for it: **viriditas**. My favorite translation of this word for virtue is “the force which through the green fuse drives the flower,” or in other words, goodness is best described as greenness, a life force that flows through you and into everything you do. This phrase transformed my view of virtue. For years, I unconsciously defined being exemplary as a list of things I did, or didn’t do. But if Hildegard is right (and I think she is), virtue is not about achievement alone, but far more pervasive and all-encompassing. It is instead a long process of living and growing and changing. This fruitful work you all have to do means patiently sowing, humbly knowing you might not reap for years, and yet still digging your fingers into that good earth. It means weathering the rough seasons, and hoping for a harvest, even when others have given up.

Viriditas (Drake cont.)

How many people in this audience, or throughout your TCA journey have exemplified this long-suffering, “fruitful work” as they have helped you? When you were crying in frustration over your times table, sounding out words, struggling to form friends, who walked alongside of you and hoped on your behalf, even though no buds had yet broken the surface? At your least useful moment, in all of your imperfections, who loved you unconditionally because you’re you? Be like them. And I promise you that though you’ll remember that positive impact they had, there are days where all of us have felt like a failure and not produced the fruit we hoped for. Some days, all we’ve felt we had to offer you is one tiny little onion. Yet despite our failures, TCA has surrounded you with these seed-sowing people, these slow-growing ideas - not quick-profit strategies for shallow, shiny success.

Personally, I’ve had at least two powerful models of fruitful work. The first and most lasting is my mother. A preschool teacher for years, she helped children who will never remember the thousand acts of kindness and creativity which formed their imaginations and prepared their minds. Even when chemotherapy incapacitated her body, her love was still germinating. Long after she died, her small seeds of faithfulness and love for others are still growing even those she was never able to see come

to fruition. It’s because of her constant love my whole life I’ve been able to confront my poisonous perfectionism, and I couldn’t have written this speech or been the teacher you all love without her love. Although I have many colleagues that exemplify this, my favorite one is my husband. I’ve taught all but 46 of you in this Senior class, But you know how many of you he has taught? 17. Total. Not many folks take French, or World Religions, or Philosophy all told. He probably will never be asked to speak at graduation because he just doesn’t get to know many of you. But you 17, how many of you have learned something from him you’ll remember your whole life? The garden may be small, but the work is good. That is the fruitful work of a particularly handsome exemplary citizen. :)

I would love to say it’s all easy successes from here. But this beautiful becoming is much more organic. It’s the slow and steady work of tending your garden. It’s not glamorous, nor quick. But the difference between labor and toil is mostly love, and hope. There is good, fruitful work ahead of you - ways to cultivate and challenge and create. And even if your academic days are now behind you, we have tried to prepare you for that green work, **that good work, that viriditas**, which matters most of all. That is what makes us truly proud as you walk across this stage - not because you’ve arrived, but because you have grown.

This day - this ceremony is not the proof of fruitful work, though I certainly celebrate your efforts. YOU are the result of fruitful work - who you are. For today, enjoy the hope that even here, in what seems like an ending, there are seeds of something new about to break the soil. May your work continue to be fruitful, and thank you for letting us watch you grow.



GRADUATION 2023

Titan of the Year History

St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital

2003-04	Bobby Silva - Interim TCA President
2004-05	Leesa Waliszewski - Instructional Philosophy Director
2005-06	Carrie Stedman - Secondary Music Director
2006-07	Kay Goble - East Elementary 1st Grade Teacher
2007-08	Sarah Myers - East Elementary Kindergarten Teacher
2008-09	Mindy Herd - Central Elementary Kindergarten Teacher
2009-10	Diana Burditt - East Elementary Principal
2010-11	John Knuth - High School Math Teacher and Golf Coach
2011-12	Russ Sojourner - Junior High Principal
2012-13	Brenda White - East Elementary 3rd Grade Teacher
2013-14	Don Stump - Central Elementary Principal
2014-15	Candus Muir - Junior High Science Teacher
2015-16	Lora Hendricks - North Elementary Tutor
2016-17	Christina Schwartz-Soper - Secondary Bands Director
2017-18	Nikki Upchurch - CP/CSP Ed Phil / Health & Wellness
2018-19	Jessica Adair - Central Elementary 1st Grade Teacher
2019-20	Lisa Kuyper - Central Elementary PE Teacher
2020-21	Linda Durck - East Elementary 3rd Grade Teacher
2021-22	Hugh DiPreto - Junior High Principal
2022-23	Erin Yeadon - North Elementary 1st Grade Teacher

TCA All-School Fundraiser for 2023-24



St. Jude Children's
Research Hospital

ALSAC • Danny Thomas, Founder

For the 2023-24 school year TCA schools will be supporting **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital** through our combined fundraising efforts. Look for more information from each school and their individual fundraising efforts throughout this coming year. **Click on the image above to donate to TCA's consolidated donation link - same for all schools.**

ANNUAL TCA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Dear TCA Staff, Parents, and Community,

The Classical Academy (TCA) is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination. Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual shall be paramount. Accordingly, we have a "no tolerance" policy with respect to acts of discrimination or harassment. All TCA educational programs, activities, and employment opportunities offered by the school are offered without regard to disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, genetic information, or conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. With respect to employment practices, TCA does not discriminate on the basis of age.

Protecting against and not tolerating discrimination and harassment is consistent with TCA's Core Values and our Creed, which states that "Titans love, respect, and protect one another. Striving to be our best, do our best, and give our best to the world." **Policy AC-TCA: Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity** outlines the procedures on how students, parents, staff, and the community may file complaints and how TCA will work to resolve all complaints.

The Classical Academy is committed to conducting prompt investigations. Any students or staff found to have engaged in any type of discrimination or harassment will be disciplined, and if circumstances warrant, suspension or expulsion of students may result. Consequences of discrimination for employees may include, but are not limited to, termination of employment. Let's work together to prevent all types of discrimination and harassment.

Any student, staff member, or parent should report any discrimination or harassment, including any Title IX, Section 504, or ADA complaints, to any TCA principal, counselor, or the following liaison:

Cheryl Birkey
Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator
975 Stout Road, Room 3422
Colorado Springs, CO 80921
719-488-6209
cbirkey1@asd20.org

We Are Titans!

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert Thomason
TCA President

25 YEARS: THREE TCA STAFF MEMBERS REACH MILESTONE



In August TCA recognized three staff members that reached their 25th anniversary at the school. **Joanna Peters, Carrie Stedman, and Stephenie Miller** [left to right] joined Dr. Thomason on stage during the beginning of year staff in-service to receive their **25 Year** pins. In TCA's history only five staff members have reached this notable milestone. Joanna, Carrie, and Stephenie - **THANK YOU** for your many years of dedicated service to our schools.

CP Graduation Address: Stefani Hille

Graduates, I want you to think about some praises and accolades you've heard in abundance recently as you've inched closer and closer to this day, or think about some phrases you've read in all the cards you've been receiving. "Way to go! We're so proud of you! You deserve this! What an accomplishment! You are so special and amazing and talented and have worked so hard to get here!" All of this might be true. But I think a bigger and more universal truth to carry with you into the next chapter of life—a truth that might actually serve you better as an adult—is this: You aren't all that special. That's a phrase you don't usually read in graduation cards or hear at a graduation ceremony, but let me explain.

Imagine your little baby self as just a lump of clay. Not much to you yet, not much going on inside your head. What do the key people in your life do from Day One? Your parents, grandparents, siblings, other extended family all start to mold and shape you. As you get a little older and branch out a bit, friends, mentors, coaches, teachers, and a whole host of other people do the same. These individuals tell you you're smart and special and kind and that you'll change the world and that you can be anything you want to be when you grow up. They pass on to you their religion, their politics, their views on money, their strategies for handling conflict, their preferred brand of laundry detergent that you will no doubt use in college or when you move out of the house... These dear people who have been in your life for your first 18 years or so have worked really hard to shape you into the best YOU you can be.



As you sit in this space here today, the metaphorical lump of clay you were as a baby has changed into something quite different from what it used to be. Your physical self is largely the result of genetics; your mental, spiritual, social, and emotional self is largely the result of your upbringing and what has been poured into you. Essentially, as you've grown up, you have been painstakingly formed into a clay pot. Now, granted, to call you clay pots makes you sound rather ordinary, but you are most definitely as varied as can be. Perhaps you are a fine Grecian urn—a collector's item, unique and set apart—or maybe you're a terra cotta piece that is practical yet stunning in its simplicity. Or maybe you are decorated with all manner of gold paint bling (aka awards) earned in academics, athletics, band, community service, art... Again, your outside appearance is as varied as can be, but what are all of you at your core? **Clay pots.**

There are some important qualities to remember about clay pots. Much like life itself, a clay pot is rarely perfect and without flaw. Imperfections can come about in the kiln firing process when under extreme heat, and outright brokenness happens when suddenly dropped. Can you see the metaphor? You all have already lived long enough to know that life hurts sometimes. In fact, some of you have been so shattered by really hard things—and have been pieced back together by those who care about you—that perhaps you feel as though you have more chips and cracks within you than you have pieces that are whole. But whether slightly dinged up or barely held together, what are all of us collectively? **Clay pots.**

So back to my opening statement that you're not all that special. If you're all clay pots, how is it that each of you is special, or the most special, or the best, or the most deserving? The truth of the matter is that you're not. You are not more special than the person sitting beside you—nor are they more special than you. That person you maybe envy a little bit who always seems to have his or her life all together? What are they? (A clay pot.) That person who occasionally (or always!) drives you nuts? What are they? (A clay pot.) Your future roommate who has some habit you can't stand? What are they? (A clay pot.) And even the person who has a different set of beliefs or political views or uses a different brand of laundry detergent... What are they? **(A clay pot.)**

And that's what I want you to take away from today. You are just a clay pot, largely created and filled by others up until this point. But now you're about to enter life's next chapter as adults. What you do with your clay pot self is now up to you. How you fill your heart, soul, and mind is up to you. Will you stay the course according to how you've been raised, or will you choose to fill your "self" with something else? Whatever you choose to do next, remember that we can't do anything worthwhile alone. The molding and shaping of YOU was not a solo project; it took nearly two decades of hard intentional work by those in this room and watching through live stream to guide your formation and put inside you all the thoughts and ideals and beliefs they valued and held dear... Treasures held in jars of clay, right? Even though you can choose how you're filled from here on out, you're going to need other clay pots to help fill you, to challenge you, to make you better, and to piece you back together when you break. What makes a clay pot special is dependent on the life it lives. And dare I say that a life well lived doesn't make the pot special. **A life well lived makes the pot priceless.**



This is who you are. Priceless.

So what are you? (Clay pots.) What are your family and friends? (Clay pots.) What are your teachers and mentors and coaches and even the people with whom you don't get along? (Clay pots.)

So go out into the world, fill yourselves wisely, live your lives well, and remember that you aren't all that special... But you are most certainly priceless.

Seek to Produce Fruitful Work



“The world is obsessed with the concept of that which will be useful, and useful work can be good, but utility is not the same as purpose. We can’t teach you everything you ever need to know that might be useful to you. So instead, at TCA we’ve given you tools and training to understand and seek good, to be good, and to do good, long after you’ve forgotten the many facts and habits which created that capability. You can and will be useful to others - but your value is not determined only by being *of use*, and nor is the value of this classical education.”

Michelle Drake

Graduation Address | TCA Class of 2023