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High Expectations

Aristotle's principle of "collective happiness" is the ideal concept of democracy - people working together to make life better for the majority of all people (Durant 534). As I look around this amphitheater tonight, I see collective happiness because we have all worked hard to earn this unified victory to celebrate. And I understand that right now, all we simply want to do is cherish this exciting moment. But tomorrow we will wake-up to face the fact that each graduate class inherits the problems and rhetoric of yesterday: we stand here as relay racers - passing the same batons onto the next class. Running the same race with no winners because the problems of poverty; the economy; wars; the environment; education, and health - issues we should all agree to make peace with for the benefit of everyone - continue to divide us rather than unite us.

Therefore, as we revel in our collective happiness tonight, I want us all to remember tomorrow and each day forward how we will uphold the ideal beliefs and principles of democracy by exemplifying a graduate class that takes action to reinforce idealism by raising our expectations.

We all know that it only takes one individual to make a difference, and this statement rings true when we selflessly help others - because compassion breeds happiness and respect for humanity. But an individual is limited to one's own power.

Aristotle's most famous pupil, Alexander the Great understood the power of unity. Without the support of unity, Alexander the Great could not obtain the power of action to unite the world with his idealistic dream: to bring freedom and education to all people. Once upon a time, thousands of years before we had these Greek ideals of collective happiness transmitted down to John Locke and Thomas Jefferson's words of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" and long before slavery was abolished in America - Alexander the Great had already achieved the ideal principles and beliefs of democracy. Alexander believed in the two key concepts of collective happiness - peace and harmony - were to extend hospitality to all nations, and provide fair prosperity for all people.

However, I believe that it is best NOT to hear my perspective OR the perspectives of certain historians with biases or agendas. We must endeavor to illuminate the true image and soul of *O' Megas Alexandros* through his own words.

Therefore, before I conclude, I shall read "The "Oath" of Alexander the Great."

'It is my wish, now that the wars are coming to an end, that you should all be happy in peace . From now on let all mortals live as one people, in fellowship for the good of all. See the whole world as your homeland, with laws common to all, where the best will govern regardless of race. Unlike the narrow-minded, I make no distinction between Greeks and Barbarians. The origin of

citizens, or the race into which they were born, is of no concern to me. I have only one criterion by which to distinguish them - virtue.

For me, any good foreigner is a Greek and any bad Greek is worse than a barbarian. If disputes ever occur among you, you will not resort to weapons but will solve them in peace. If need be, I shall arbitrate between you. See God not as an autocratic despot, but as the common father of all and thus your conduct will be like the lives of brothers within the same family. I, on my part, see you all as equal, whether you are white or dark-skinned. And I should like you not simply to be subjects of my commonwealth, but members of it. Partners of it. To the best of my ability, I shall strive to do what I have promised. Keep this oath which we have taken tonight with our libations as a symbol of love."

And that distinguished faculty; fellow graduates; ladies and gentleman was recorded in 324 B.C. by Opis. Is that not quite sad? Yet, this dream can be resurrected - and it begins with you and I to take action to do so! When we think in terms of collective happiness - we will support nothing less than the best for all people around the world. Thus, let us remember from this day forward - this oath of action to make life better for everyone! Thank you very much.