

Four years ago I made the same choice as everyone else in this room. A choice we have all, no doubt, questioned but never regretted. A choice that has led us here, to this room – together.

As I write this, I wonder whether these thoughts have already been thought. These words already written. Perhaps they were, and perhaps they rang true until time washed them away the same way my prayer shall fade away in time.

Less than twenty years my eyes have seen. But I have seen the sun rise and set. I have seen dark days and cold nights. I have seen great joy and great pain. Thankfulness and sorrow. And I know this to be true...

Each and every one of us is a flame. We burn bright with the fury of the sun through day and night. Let our flames not go out. May they stay strong and be beacons of our glory.

And for those whose light has gone out, do not be consumed with sorrow. We are like candles brought together at the wicks. When one light goes out, the others share the burden and keep the flame.

So in a sense no one is really lost. We carry them with us like the candle sharing a flame. We carry them in our hearts. But this is not my prayer. This is yours. So look around you and ask yourself: is there someone else in this room whose light I would hold in my heart? Ask yourself if you hold the light of a friend or family member you've lost. If you say "Yes," then stand. Show that as you take their flame with yours, your fire rises as you rise from your seat.

If you and I could stand together like this and make our voices heard, know that we would bring the world to its feet! Know that if we said "yell Amen," all would yell, and if we said "Jump," all would jump. And know that the power of our union would make the very earth tremble to its core and the very gates of heaven shake!

And it is with this spirit that we end our four years. We will turn to our friends and say goodbye only to hold such a blaze that all obstacles will melt away.

I give you this – my best – and together with all our brothers and sisters, we join hands and say "Amen." "God Bless." "I love you." And "Goodbye."

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Class of 2005