

### **“Don’t Quote Me on That,” by Carrie Lang**

Do you want to hear a life-changing quote? Then speak. Now, maybe some of you are wondering, ‘How can I speak when that girl on stage won’t be quiet? Other people might be thinking they have nothing memorable to say. Well, according to this college, and the degrees you have earned, you do have that ability. This class as a whole has experienced major world events, has individually learned lessons in specific fields, and has ultimately grown in values, diligence, and knowledge. With these lessons, the potential voice and actions of the Marietta College class of 2005 are limitless.

From the first year of our college careers, we faced a changing world. The nation was dealing with the attack on September 11 in our first semester, and this showed our class an uncertain future that we could take part in. A subsequent war ensued over which the country and even classmates at this school were divided. Later, we cheered together for the U.S. in the Olympics, then concluded this past year arguing again, this time over the Presidential Election. These world-changing experiences touched our class as a unique group, and offered us many opportunities to see areas we could revolutionize. As we gained in knowledge, we also gained a voice, which led to action, which led to growth. The world altered this class, and through that education, we are prepared to alter the world

Believe it or not, though, many of us were actually affected inside the classroom, as well. Every person graduating today has a college education specializing in certain areas, which is not only an achievement to be proud of, but also a useful tool. Here are just a few examples of the lessons everybody can take from the majors offered at MC: The accounting majors tell us to be conscientious of money – contrary to popular belief,

money does NOT grow on trees. The athletic trainers tell us that we all fall in life at times, but it's getting back up again that matters. Chemistry majors help us see that we actually do have energy within us, enough to make changes – even if it sometimes takes a nap to recharge. Computer science reminds us that things will break, and you will get frustrated, but that's when you breathe, hit the restart button, and begin your search again. English scholars explain that there's always a deeper meaning to things, and if you take the time to find it, that's usually the important one. Marketing experts prove that information is important, but presentation is power. Mathematicians instruct us to demand proof, instead of naïvely believing that one plus one always equals two. Psychology majors ask us to remember that everyone is a little crazy, so don't judge, just enjoy. Finally, education majors teach us that learning never stops, no matter what your age. From these specific majors, as well as others, many students are sitting here today with the tools they need to speak up and act. Every paper we've finished, every exam we've passed, every lecture in which we've stayed awake has equipped us for whatever tomorrow brings.

There have been many chances for the graduating seniors to take our experiences from world and personal transformations, and build a class that excels in values, diligence, and knowledge. Some students have joined clubs in which they developed a new respect for responsibility. They may have also learned that the majority of work is often accomplished by a minority of people. Others chose to participate in sports and came away with a competitive drive to always improve. As a member of the tennis team here at MC, I learned an additional lesson – the value of the school paying for nice meals during away matches. The people in Greek life have made several contributions to

campus, and have also come to know the worth of camaraderie. That, and how fun it can still be to act like kids during Greek week. Those in honorary societies have demonstrated the importance of academics. No matter what they may have told you on *Saved By the Bell*, it is not nerdy to show intelligence; it's something to be proud of. Students comprising political groups let the campus know that each voice is important. With as much debate as I heard during the 2004 Presidential Election, I think we've all realized that. People who were part of religious groups stood strongly in their beliefs, which is impressive in the midst of all the temptations college offers. Finally, those involved in community service ventures found the value of helping others. As the religious group could advise, it's better to give than receive, and the people involved in community projects can verify the power of each person's words and actions. What an amazing amount of involvement, and what incredible development of character.

Nobody in this class is the same as when they entered MC four years ago, and no one changed alone. Friends, teachers, and groups have shaped these newly developed identities, as have the decisions you personally made. A friend of mine once told me the following:

In life we do things; some we wish we had never done, some we wish we could replay a million times in our heads, but they make us who we are. And in the end, those experiences shape every detail about us. If we were to reverse any of them, we wouldn't be at the exact place that we are today. So live, make mistakes, and have wonderful times, but never second guess who you are, where you have been, and most importantly, where it is you are going.

You all are here today because the MC class of 2005 has accomplished something great – we have survived all-nighters, fights involving friendships and relationships, decisions to spend time studying or to go downtown, and we have made it to this day with more wisdom, experience, and knowledge. Inside and outside of MC, these are words and actions that will guide us into our futures.

Personally, I want to be an occupational therapist. I decided upon this career when I asked an occupational therapist who works with disabled children how many of her patients she helps. I expected her to say half, maybe a little more than half, of the children who come to her improve. Instead she told me, “Every person I touch is helped in some way.” Now there is a goal to which we can aspire.

One man who accomplished many of his goals and was unafraid to be heard once said, “If we all knew what we were capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.” The speaker of that quote, Thomas Edison, did not graduate from Marietta College, but he knew what we have all come to learn in our college careers – perseverance, courage, and faith in our own potential can lead to unbelievable results. You came to MC, you passed, you excelled, and the degree you now hold verifies that through your life and voice, you can make your own motivational quotes.