

# A True Transformation

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**President** Scott, Provost Kipp, Trustees, Faculty, Staff, Friends, Family, and most importantly my fellow classmates of the class of 2011, welcome to the 2011 Marietta College commencement ceremony. Class of 2011, today we graduate...don't you love it when keynote speakers tell you the obvious? Like today is the first day of the rest of your life...well so was yesterday, and so is tomorrow actually. I would think that after four years of college that we would all realize that we are about to graduate. **Nevertheless**, I believe that it's essential that before we do receive that degree we reflect upon how during the past four years Marietta College has changed, and how that change has been embodied in each of us.

**Four** years ago we enrolled in a college whose library resembled a pile of rubble, well actually it was a pile of rubble. However, since that day our college has built a magnificent library, and a state of the art planetarium. The college has added new staff, bold initiatives, and an innovative strategic plan for the future. **The Legacy Library** has provided a place on campus for students to study, work, and enjoy the silence that is rarely available in our residence halls. It also meant that we didn't need to climb the five flights of stairs in Mills Hall to find our books. With the creation of the Anderson-Hancock Planetarium, students are able to see the stars in galaxies light-years away while enjoying some of the best seats on campus. **However**, one of the most dramatic changes that Marietta Collage has encountered is how we interact with the community. Led by the McDonough Center for Leadership and Business, Marietta College has developed critical ties with the food pantry, the YMCA, and the Eli Chapman center, just to name a few local organizations. **By bridging** the gap from the world of academia to the town of Marietta, to which we owe so much, Marietta College is becoming an irreplaceable institution having an undeniable impact on our community on campus and off campus. Through the transformation that has occurred during our past four years, our college has placed more emphasis on academics while ensuring that students understand the importance of civic engagement.

**Because** of the transformation on this campus, we too as students have been transformed. As a class we have witnessed the changing scenery through the addition of new buildings, and although we may not realize it, the greatest change occurred in each of us. This can be attributed mostly from our professors and our friends. The professors at Marietta College are truly unlike any others. In the classroom, they are among the best instructors in their field of expertise. And outside

the classroom they will go out of their way to help you, even if you don't always ask for it. Our professors were integral in making us who we are, whether it was from challenging our beliefs of creationism in geology class, or forcing us to question why we are drawn to certain political candidates. These individuals that have taught us so much from books have probably taught us more about ourselves than we ever realized.

**But** as we all know, college isn't all classes, and it's the relationships we've created outside of class with our peers that have perhaps shaped us most. Those who have cried with us, celebrated with us, and stuck with us, even when we may have been making poor choices. For many of us our first friends were those in our Freshmen Year Seminar Experience, and for me personally, many of those people who I was forced to talk to in the three separate classes we shared are some of my closest friends today. **Yet**, wherever you found your friends, whether it was in a sorority, fraternity, on your sports team, or from another campus organization, these people became a fundamental part of your life at college. These individuals become the ones we discussed ideas with, did homework together, and questioned how to impact the world. Slowly, over these years at Marietta, we have either adopted or rejected the ideas from our professors and friends. But without question, our views and beliefs have been impacted from our time with these individuals and our time on this campus.

**Graduates** of the class of 2011, we each became members of the long blue line four years ago at the matriculation ceremony, but we were different people. Our stay at Marietta College has transformed us into new individuals with different ideas and beliefs we previously held. I would like to hope that this change in each of us has been positive, and if it has, let me lend you a challenge; a challenge to not let this transformation end today. **As we enter** into the next chapter of our lives continue this transformation. However this time, you be the stimulus, be the catalysts that starts a movement, whether it be through civic engagement as Marietta College has taught us, or become ecologically responsible, or even a new crusade to alter basic ideas entrenched in how our society operates. **Marietta** College has provided us with the framework to set out and transform our communities, but only because we were a part of the transformation on this campus. By taking this aspect with us into the rest of our lives, the legacy of Marietta College will continue to live in each of us. And that long blue line will prosper through our beliefs and our actions wherever our paths may lead us.