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Jewett Competition Speech
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3. 2. 1. Jump.

You are standing on a dock at the water's edge. It is a beautiful summer day, the sun shining on your back and the sound of your closest friends laughing around you. A unanimous decision is made to grab hands and to jump in. Your chest tightens at the thought of plunging into the cold water, as you cannot see the bottom, nor know what lies beneath. Yet once realizing the trustworthy individuals beside you, who have been your companions and confidants for what seems like eternity, your heart rate begins to settle. You grab hands and prepare to take the dramatic leap of faith. At the count of three, two, one, JUMP, everyone hurdles into the air. For a brief second, you experience a feeling of weightlessness, before crashing into the icy blue.

At face value, this summer scene may appear to bear no relation to our commencement, sounding like nothing more than an enjoyable day at the lake. I can assure you, however, that the different pieces of this story are woven deeply into the fabric of our Marietta College experience and embody the profound values that our second home has instilled in us.

The water represents the grand concept of the unknown and the inability to conceptualize our future as college graduates. It is terrifying, stomach curdling, and, quite frankly, more than a little uncomfortable! During a Human Geography class, our professor began discussing how he would be surprised if ten years from now we were working within the career path we expected. Rationally I thought, "Why the heck have I been studying leadership and psychology, if one day I will be an astronaut or perhaps a rodeo clown!" Upon reflection, I realized how much my studies and liberal arts education matter. The multitude of courses taken, have molded us into renaissance people ready to enter any conversation prepared to discuss dramatic literature or photosynthesis. The liberal arts focus has created a foundation of continuous learning, critical

thinking, and adaptability to any situation. Not only has our education shaped us, but our involvement in various campus activities and organizations propel us off the dock, equipped with the life jacket to leave the dock fearlessly!

The most inspiring periods of growth I have experienced have been at times where I was the most uncomfortable, such as studying abroad or hanging on a high ropes course. But within similar moments of fear and apprehension, by taking the lunge forward we are able to learn so much about ourselves and discover more meaningfully, where we want to go next. Marietta College has challenged us to rise to the occasion and succeed amidst many of these moments of discomfort. The unknown is exciting. It is going to take us all over the world, to careers we never would have imagined, and to people who will change our lives.

The friends reaching out to grab our hands before the jump represent the relationships we have formed here. These friendships give us a hand to hold and support to make the leap. We have been privileged to attend an institution focused on a culture of human connection. This concentration on camaraderie began with the enthusiastic students who said “hello” and smiled at us through our college visit. During one of my first trips to Marietta, my parents and I were looking at a college map, trying to find our way, when a student unexpectedly asked where we wanted to go. That small interaction showed me that a culture of warmth, openness, and friendship existed at Marietta College, and I wanted to be a part of it. Over our college careers we have had the opportunity to build relationships. Late nights up talking and laughing, driving to Wal-Mart with ten people crammed in one car, celebrating the successes of friends getting jobs, internships, or a free slushy at Speedway, the little moments have continued to make our experience special.

The Long Blue Line continues the tradition of interconnectedness. The metaphor of “The Long Blue Line” has always astounded me; I mean, that line is LONG, 178 years long! It is filled with alumni of different backgrounds, hometowns, interests, and careers. Spanning across time and space, we now have the opportunity to wrap ourselves in the Long Blue Line as it leads us out into the world.

The culture of liberal arts, personal development, and human connection, are pieces of Marietta’s history I do not see changing any time soon. Thus It is time to highlight some of the historical points that encompass our four years at MC and that make us tried and true pioneers. To reflect on the class of 2013’s amazing Marietta moments, I have crafted the fabulous Top 10 list! I shall now bring forth my inner David Letterman as I present to you, ***The Top Ten Things We Will Never Forget About Marietta College!***

Number Ten: Enjoying your first Sternwheel Festival, carnival food, boats lining the Ohio, and a fireworks display that cannot be beaten.

Number Nine: Painting the rock for the first time. A tradition leaving your fingers covered in spray paint and a personal mark on MC history.

Number Eight: With the formation of Cooking 301, The Bruno’s Choice Awards, and the “sMASHing” potato bar event, one would think President and Mrs. Bruno have always been a part of the MC Family.

Number Seven: The lovely cards at the Legacy Library that told us what we were banned from consuming at the computer.

Number Six: The construction of Harrison Hall, with its leaky roof, crazy residents, and long list of maintenance issues, the building still stands!

Number Five: The year of the Gilman Plague, something we would actually prefer to forget!

Number Four: Watching our athletic teams and forensic teams win major championships, supported by the mantra “I believe that we will win!”

Number Three: Doo Dah Day freshmen year. Beautiful weather, inflatables and the final year of the ever popular mud volleyball.

Number Two: Walking down the mall on a beautiful day. Seeing the campus shine and hearing the bells chime our alma mater.

Number One: The amazing relationships formed among the college employees and our peers, symbolizing our value of human connection.

Marietta College is our dock. It has given us a place to stand and to grow into mature and intelligent individuals. From it we have gained friendships that will last a lifetime, knowing that no matter where we are, our friends will always lend a hand. Although the thought of leaving the dock is not an easy one and, we want to hold on desperately to what we know, it is time that we all take a deep breath, and 3, 2, 1- jump!

Congratulations, Class of 2013.