



Joey Bresette

2020

Thirty miles off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, accessible only by ferry or plane, you'll find the island of Nantucket. Those that are familiar with the island know that it is truly a unique place; home to a vibrant community. Nantucket is the home of R.H. Macy, the founder of one my favorite department stores. James A. Folger, the founder of my favorite coffee, was also born and raised in Nantucket. Most importantly, though, Nantucket is the home of Joey Bresette, one of Salisbury's finest young gentlemen and the first student whom I have the distinct pleasure of introducing for induction into our Cum Laude Chapter.

Joey, here we are, nearly four years complete; and my, what a career it has been. You came to us in the fall of 2016 as a young boy from the Island, not quite sure if this were the right place for you. It did not take long, though, to find your footing and quickly begin contributing to the community. I still remember that 14-year-old boy, and not just because your face is right there every day on the homepage of the school website when I sign into the Portal, but because, even then, that boy was making an impact on the Hilltop.

From day one, Joey, you have cemented yourself as a true academic weapon here. You have always been completely dedicated to your education, something that I know has been instilled in you and cultivated by your parents. Over the course of your time at Salisbury, you've been enrolled in six AP and ten Honors classes. You have not let homesickness, physical sickness, sports commitments, nor even a global pandemic derail your quest for academic excellence. A+ has appeared forty-one times on your report cards thus far, and you have excelled in courses on both sides of the quad. Your teachers have always praised your hard work, dedication and willingness to help others.

In writing this speech, I consulted the resident "Joey expert," Mr. Chandler, a man who has had the privilege of knowing you all 18 years of your life. He describes you as a "still-waters-run-deep" guy; someone who is ethical, extremely thoughtful and who takes great pride in what he does and enjoys sharing that with others. You do that at home, on Nantucket, each summer in your role as a lifeguard, feeling responsible for beach guests who have come to summer on your island. Mr. Chandler calls you a "steward of fun-but-safe enjoyment of the summer gifts." That is exactly what you have done here at Salisbury, too: striving to do your very best, having fun and ensuring that others enjoy and learn from the experience just as much as you do.

As a third former in Honors Biology, Mr. Strauss praised you for bringing "a quiet passion and curiosity to learning that is contagious to [your] peers." He also noted that what set you apart from the rest was your "great attention to detail and continued pride in not only earning a good grade but also getting the most out of every assignment through [your] overall thoroughness." You were a quiet presence in the classroom; but you knew, even at age 15, the importance of leading by example and always putting your best foot forward.

As the years have passed, that quiet boy has transformed into a confident young man - still ever diligent with his studies but more apt to engage in and drive class discussions. You offer up insight that proves helpful not

only to yourself but to your classmates as well. Mr. Hargrove captured it best in his year-end comment for you in Precalculus Honors your fifth form year. He highlighted how you can "understand a new concept or method and adapt it" to make sense to you. You do not just replicate what's on the board; instead, you absorb it, work with it and mold it into something that is relatable to you. Without ever probably realizing it, you make those concepts more relatable for one or more of your peers, too.

You and I recently had the opportunity to catch up via Zoom, and you told me that you have always liked math but have really grown to love English during your time here. Comments from your English teachers over the last four years all highlight your prowess in this discipline; however, I think Mr. Rochelson rounded it out best this fall. "Joey became my most reliable source of provocative questions and in-depth analysis of the text. He was capable of moving the class discussion into unique and meaningful areas that we would not have visited if not for his remarks." Learning for you is so much more than just the product; it's also the process, and you revel in that process.

You've also contributed so much to our school beyond the classroom. You've been active in the One Love program since your very first year on campus; in fact, you were the only third former in the group that year and have helped steward the success of Salisbury's participation in educating youth about healthy relationships and interactions. You've served as a Peer Leader, helping other boys acclimate to life at Salisbury and providing a shoulder for them to lean on during their transition to the Hilltop. You participated in our Big Brothers Program, working with local boys, mentoring them and exposing them to the brotherhood of Salisbury. You've given tours to prospective families, sharing your love for this place. And who can forget your community announcements at school meetings this year? Would 14-year-old Joey have ever imagined that he'd stand up in front of the whole school on a bi-weekly basis? I, for one, am truly going to miss that next year.

Like your island, you, too, are unique and vibrant. You've shared with me that what is most important to you, particularly as you move on from Salisbury, is meeting people and making connections. You want to be your authentic self in authentic situations. You've done that here. You have learned and grown so much from your experience but always stayed true to yourself and what is important to you. I know you will go on to pursue great things wherever life takes you after the Hilltop. Your advisor, Mr. Wynne, said it best in his letter home this fall: "[Joey] represents the very best of what Salisbury School stands for, and we are extremely lucky to have him as part of our community. There is little else to say, other than to emphasize that he has earned every bit of this success." I couldn't agree more.

It has truly been an honor getting to know you these last four years, Joey, and I cannot think of anyone else I would rather welcome as my first inductee than you. Congratulations, Joey Bresette, and welcome to the Salisbury School Cum Laude Society.

Julia Barbato
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