

DEAN'S BLOG – 05.19.2015

LWMA Class of 2015 Racks Up Scholarships

We are all proud of the LWMA Class of 2015, which to date has earned more than \$500,000 in scholarship awards to two- and four-year colleges and universities. Additional scholarship monies are pending as of this writing.

Colter Sheveland, the Valedictorian and Battalion Commander, is truly a Lyman Ward product, having enrolled here as a seventh grader in 2010. He graduated with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. The Colorado Springs, CO, native was awarded a four-year United States Navy ROTC scholarship valued at \$250,000. He was offered a scholarship valued at \$6,000 by Marion Military Institute. Additionally, he received a Presidential Merit Scholarship to Norwich University in Vermont in the amount of \$80,000. Colter will attend Norwich in the Fall, where he plans to major in biochemistry.

Other seniors who have been offered scholarships include: Iverson Cimino, Dean's Scholarship, Norwich University (he also will play football at Norwich, which as a NCAA Division III institution, does not offer athletic scholarships); Christian Coyne, Academic Scholarship, Merrimack College; Taylor Thornton, Music Scholarship, Marion Military Institute, and Military Leadership Scholarship, Georgia Military College; and Solomon Watkins, Academic Merit Scholarship, Johnson C. Smith University.

Post-Graduation Plans for the LWMA Class of 2015

"Oh, the Places You'll Go," Dr. Seuss says, and here are the destinations and confirmed college acceptances for the rest of the Class of 2015, at least as of graduation day: Marius Bernt, Georgia Military College; Corbitt Berryhill, Jefferson State Community College; Hunter Black, The University of Alabama; Tyrel Chambers, Georgia Military College; Stephen Conley, University of Central Florida; William Dasinger, Troy University; Cole Mathis, University of West Georgia; Shawn Nori, *Salutatorian*, enlist in U. S. Navy; George Polhemus, enlist in U. S. Air Force; Miguel Ricart, college in the Dominican Republic; Taylor Walker, technical college in Connecticut; and Hayden Whitehead, University of Memphis. We wish all of them godspeed.

Commencement Speaker's Awesomely Honest Advice

Our graduates, families, and guests attending the 2015 Commencement exercises were treated to two outstanding commencement addresses. The Baccalaureate speaker was Mr. James Cullins, former state legislator and long-time area minister who is still going strong – and

pastoring a church – at age 85. Mr. Cullins urged the graduates to look for, work for, and conquer mountains of challenge in their lives.

Dr. Matt Kerlin, Assistant Dean of Spiritual Life and University Minister at Samford University in Birmingham, AL – my alma mater – spoke “In Defense of Normal” at graduation. Kerlin described himself as an “atypical graduation speaker,” since he does not consider himself exceptional, special, or extremely successful.

“I think I see a lot of students who feel tremendous pressure to excel, achieve, succeed, or do something spectacular, and I think a lot of commencement ceremonies often emphasize the way that our culture is kind of infatuated with celebrity and high achievement,” Kerlin said. “The world does not need a few more celebrities trying to fix what is broken while posing for photos.

“Statistically, most people are not going to be rich, or famous, or powerful,” he said. “But there can be something quite rewarding about leading a virtuous life, even if you aren’t in the spotlight when you do it. There can be great joy and satisfaction in that, a great contentment in that fact.”

Kerlin’s conception of “normal” does not mean lazy or even average. In his speech, he defined “normal” people as folks who are virtuous, servant leaders who are loyal to their families and friends, who work hard at meaningful tasks, and who are faithful to their religious beliefs.

“What the world needs is a few billion normal people committed to making the world a better place; a few billion normal people willing to pray, ‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth’; a few billion normal people willing to fight poverty and disease and racial inequality and violence in all its forms; a few billion normal people who love their families and their neighbors and do their jobs well, day after day after ordinary day,” Kerlin said in the speech. “And the sum total of all that normal would indeed be exceptional.”

And all the people said, “Amen...”