

## Noah Barbieri Convocation Address August 23, 2017

A 2009 Study by the University of California found that the parts of the brain that store autobiographical memories are triggered when listening to familiar music. Hearing a song from your past can instantly take you back to where you were when you were listening to it. *Especially* when the song is from a time of dramatic change in your life. Beginning college certainly qualifies as a time of dramatic change, and you will likely remember this time along side the music you are listening to right now. Don't challenge me to this, but I still know every single word to Taylor Swift's 1984 album that came out at the beginning of freshman year, and believe me, I am not the type of person to know every word of a Swift song under regular circumstances.

Thus, I am going to give advice using the titles from the U.S. Billboards top 50 song list not only so that you can remember what I say, but to show you that I am actually pretty cool.

1<sup>st</sup>, BE HUMBLE: in high school you might have been valedictorian or had the highest ACT or were the star athlete, or maybe all three, but that's likely not the case any more. In a school this small it is difficult to fit in if you act like you are better than anyone else.

Especially have humility when it comes to your beliefs and ideas. We live in a polarizing time and we must come together to hear one another. Don't push your beliefs on others: *you might be wrong*. Be teachable: *you will probably learn something*. I guarantee that you will be challenged by your professors and fellow students to think in different ways. Even though what other students and your professors say may seem like WILD THOUGHTS, humor them and try thinking in a different way. This place has changed my life by not teaching me what to think, but rather how to think. There are too many students that come in thinking that they know everything and miss out. Don't be one of those people and give this place a chance.

2<sup>nd</sup> DESPACITO: it means slowly in Spanish. These four years will fly by. You will blink and you will be a senior like I am. Seize every opportunity, but remember to slow down from time to time: have a long conversation with a professor or another student. Throw a Frisbee out in the bowl. Take a few days off from the rush and spend time with your friends or loved ones.

We live in a culture where it is a status symbol to be constantly busy, to be DROWNING in stress. At Millsaps students have a tendency to get over involved, and it is frankly not healthy for the individual or the Millsaps community to do. It is absolutely ok if you don't get involved in everything on campus. Don't feel like you have to, just be sure to do what you are doing well and thoughtful.

The last thing I want to talk about is the song from Logic: 1-800-273-8255. The title is the phone number to the National Suicide Hot Line. Mental health is a very real and very important part of life. In the coming months, you will likely be under more stress than you ever have been, you will be away from your parents, your support group, many of you will get your first bad grade or what you perceive to be your first major failure. It will likely be a trying time and it can all negatively impact mental health. We have many mental health resources at Millsaps and in the Jackson community. Never feel bad for a second seeking

out mental health services. I believe that everyone should seek out mental health services regularly like we do with doctors to take care of our bodies. Your RA's, your foundation leaders, faculty, and staff have your back---go to them if you ever feel over overwhelmed.

This place can change your life. It took this Mississippi boy and opened the world up to me. It gives me GOOSEBUMPS to think about how it will change each of you.

CONGRATULATIONS, you have made it this far, and frankly you have greatly decreased your chances of being YOUNG, DUMB, and BROKE.

Have a great four years I promise it will be UNFORGETTABLE.

--Thank you