

Brian Johnson - Class of 2002



St. Francis College is a small community which prides itself upon the ideals of faith, scholarship, and service. Founded in 1884 by the Franciscan Brothers, St. Francis College was formed with the hope of creating an institution where people could study the deeper meaning of the Christian faith and the importance of higher education in general. Since that time, St. Francis College has grown exponentially and welcomes students and faculty of all ethnic backgrounds and religious beliefs with an affordable, traditional liberal arts education. As we come together today, we represent the 117th graduating class of St. Francis College, a testament to the continuing dedication of the Franciscans to provide a

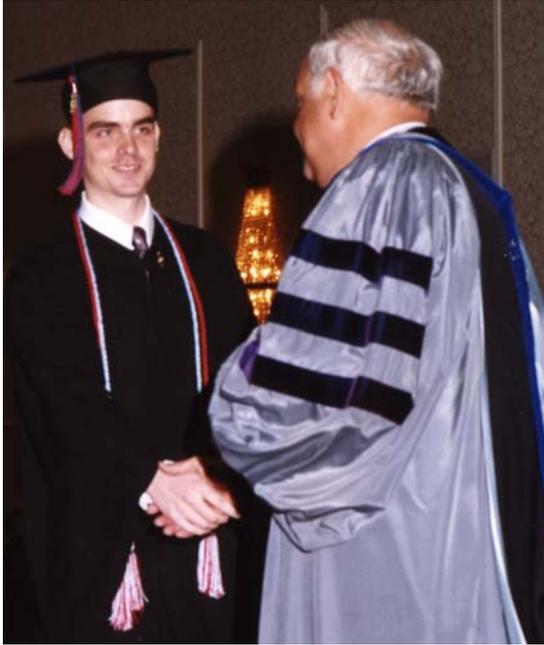
liberal arts education in a time of uncertainty and change.

My time at St. Francis College has been a memorable one, and I would like to thank my parents and family for always supporting me and believing in me, even when I wasn't sure of where my life might take me. I would also like to thank Dr. Macchiarola and my scholarship sponsors, the Genovesi family. You have truly changed my path in life, a change which I am all the better for, and I cannot adequately express my gratitude to you. I would also like to thank the faculty of St. Francis College who have always been there for me, taking the time, both in and out of class, to answer any questions I might have had. And finally, I would like to thank my friends. You have taught me what community and friendship are really all about and have made Saint Francis a place I have enjoyed attending.

My heartfelt congratulations go out to my fellow graduates who have worked so hard to earn their degrees and be here today. Yet as we graduate, we know that this ceremony is a commencement, not a completion. Even as this chapter of our lives closes, we are not to understand our graduation as an ending, but a beginning. We are called to go forth from here today



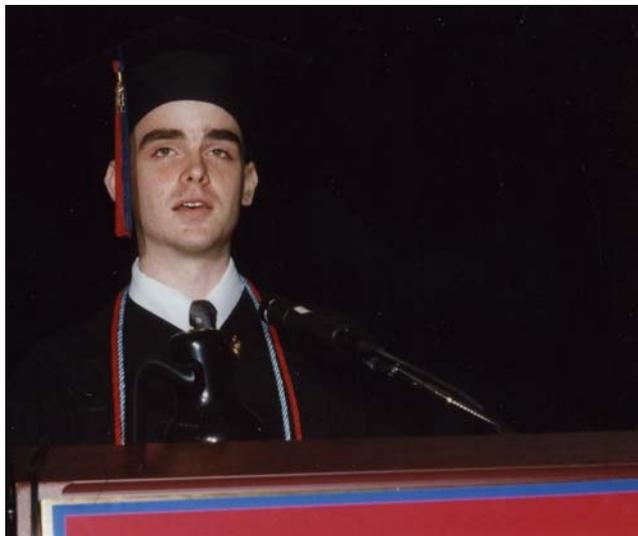
and reflect to the world what we have learned at Saint Francis. And there is much in the world which requires our reflection.



We seem to live in a world where the words justice and virtue have little meaning. The common maxims of the day seem to say, "If it feels good, do it." But what have we to show for this line of reasoning? People have turned passenger jets into guided missiles and crashed them into buildings. Students have turned schools into firing ranges, with human beings as targets. And suicide bombers have transformed their own lives into instruments of death. And yet, in the face of all of this, there is goodness. There is goodness more intense than the hatred and ignorance which challenge it. We have seen it in the firefighters, police officers, and emergency personnel who sacrificed their lives while trying to save others. We see it in our families and loved ones, who have encouraged us throughout college. We see it

in our teachers and the faculty of St. Francis College. And we see it in ourselves.

As graduates of St. Francis College, we have worked hard to earn our degrees. And yet, in addition to our own efforts, we have been given much as well. We have been given the opportunity to receive a quality education, and we have been given family and friends who care for us. But more than that, in a time of uncertainty and change, we have been given the opportunity to do good in the world. We are called to go forth from here today, not simply to cut out our slice of life in the world, but to share that slice with the people around us. This is the key to understanding the Franciscan education which we have received. Of all the things that we have learned at Saint Francis, remember that being a good person is just as important as, or even more important than, being a good employee or a good student. Remember that wisdom comes only when you realize that there is more to be learned. And finally, remember that life is short, and that we must make the most of it. You never know what may occur tomorrow, as is evident in the tragic events of September 11th. So live each day to do the best you can, which, in the end, is why we are all here today. Enjoy your success, for you have earned it. But more than that, do good by sharing that success in service to



others. I wish all of you the best of luck in all you do. Thank you.