

## **180<sup>th</sup> Commencement Senior Class President(s) Speech – Summer Jamie & Ally Majano**

### **Ally:**

The past four years here at Hollins have shaped us in many ways one would've never imagined. Many of us came with the intention of keeping a low profile, passing our classes, earning the degree and leaving quickly to start our lives. Many of us failed at that attempt, including myself. Hollins is a campus that builds community and ties you into so many extracurriculars. In the past four years, I've grown in many aspects, (pause) I've been president of Unión de Estudiantes Latines for three years, for two years I was La Casa Hispanica's vice president, I've been social media coordinator, have had positions in class cabinet, and excitingly became ADA Queen. It was a lot to deal with, and I pray I don't have to experience that kind of stress again (pause), but it taught me that I can handle whatever is thrown my way with the help of the community this campus builds. It brought me closer to my advisor's, peers, and friends. It taught me that no matter the outcome of something, I'd have a group of supportive friends and advisors rooting for me.

We missed a year of traditions last year, there was no Tinker Day for our Junior year, our Ring Night was moved to the spring term and became Ring Week, and there was no senior week to send off our bigs with much love. It was a hard year, but we made the most of it. Zoom classes were sometimes fun, but many times stressful due to the horrible wifi our dorms have. It was a challenge for all of us (pause), our friends were thousands of miles away and only half of campus was here, including half of the professors. Junior year was definitely a hard year, but we overcame the obstacles thrown our way. And now, here we stand, with our cords, serving as a reminder of the successes we've had since arriving here, and we carry them with fulfillment along with a little bit of leftover stress. We carry evidence of our successes with us with pride, and I hope after four years of this institution, we walk away with confidence not just in our victories but in our failures as well. The things we never put on plaques or hang up on the walls or wear around our necks. The job applications and tinder matches that ghosted us (pause), the tests we bombed, the meetings we missed. (slight pause) We're also here to celebrate that, because in the past four years we've grown, it has led us to where we are standing now, built us up and helped us spread our curiosity to trying new things. That beautiful milestone is what we're celebrating today. I'm proud of all you seniors, and the outcome our four years at Hollins has given us.

## **Summer:**

The journey to get here today I'm sure is not how anyone pictured it be to. If you think about it, we have not had a single 'normal year' of college. I invite everyone to now think back to Fall 2018. Most of us entering college as new, excited freshmen, looking forward to being on this stage in four years. Even if you were not a freshman at the time, and joined us later just imagine Fall 2018 in Roanoke, Virginia.

Less than a month into college we were all sent home due to a hurricane that never came. The next year as sophomores we all watched as the nation sent home students, and finally we got a two week spring break, that left us at home enrolled in Zoom University. Junior year came and went with a very different campus. Some of us here on campus while others were taking classes at 1am across the world. Then senior year arrived and we all rushed back to campus and were suddenly running down the halls of Tinker with pots and pans for Tinker Day.

If we as a class have taken anything away from the past four years I hope its that life is full of the unknown, but that's okay and we're gonna be okay. No matter how many five years plans we make or how many times we may map out the future, at the end of the day, we simply don't know what tomorrow holds. And no matter how hard we try to control

or manifest things, we simply can't. I know Ariana Grande said God is a Woman, but some days it really seems like patriarchy is out to get us.

Life is full of constant change, but that change is what makes it so rewarding. Sure a once in a lifetime pandemic hit but we're here. Sure social change rocked our campus and our entire nation, but we're here. Sure our pipes burst every few weeks, but we're here.

Being here today with all of you has shown me that we are more than capable. Capable of doing anything we set our minds to. For a lot of us that was being here today. Despite all of the struggles we may have faced we are here. And we have Hollins to thank for allowing us to grow and become the people we are today. Sure most of us planned to graduate, but I don't think we expected it to come this fast. But now that it's here I'm feeling okay. I'll be the first to say that I have no idea what the next chapter of life looks like. And I'm sure some of you may feel the same. After four or so years of late library sessions, NEFA parties, and Monday Bingos, this is a big change for all of us.

But we can all step away today with the skills and tools Hollins has provided us over our time here to step into our next phase, and be confident. No matter what that looks like. Be comfortable with the

unknown, and able to adapt to anything life throws at us. Hey if we can survive a power outage during final exams, I know we can survive anything. Thank you all once again for being here as we turn the page from Hollins to whatever life brings us next.

Congratulations Seniors! Thank you.