

180th Commencement Welcome: President Mary Dana Hinton

Greetings, members of the Hollins University Board of Trustees, esteemed faculty and staff, proud parents, and, most especially, our graduating students. Congratulations to the undergraduate and graduate classes of 2022. Please accept my most heartfelt welcome to Hollins' 180th Commencement. It is a privilege to stand before you on the most significant and joyful day of the academic calendar.

There is a quote with which I am familiar with that takes on special meaning at commencement. It reads, Behind you, all your memories; before you, all your dreams; around you, all who love you; within you, all you need.

Behind you

It has truly been a privilege to journey with you. As a community that is soon to be behind you, please know that you have made us better. The spirit of justice, action, and love that you brought to Hollins University was palpable since you first arrived on our campus.

While you have experienced the most challenging of collegiate experiences, from a hurri-cation to a pandemic, you have proven

yourselves to be hopeful, engaged, and filled with purpose.

I hope that your memories of Hollins will be defined by the ways you excelled, learned to lead, and grew. I pray that it will be moments of learning, courage and kindness that will illuminate your memories of your time here.

Before you

As you look before you and as you dream big dreams, know that you are equipped to excel in the world. Your liberal arts education has prepared you to face whatever professional, civic, or personal opportunities and challenges you will encounter. You have the depth of knowledge acquired in your academic discipline and the breadth of knowledge acquired as a liberal arts graduate. You are ready to chase your dreams.

Whether you have accepted a job offer or promotion, are continuing your education, are beginning to write your magnum opus, or remain undecided about your next step, know that you are prepared for whatever choices you make.

Around you

Now, look around you. Next to you are the only people in the world who shared this unique Hollins experience with you at this moment in time. They know a version of you that has never been known before, that will never be known again. The people surrounding you are your Hollins family, and I ask that you commit to continuing to lift one another up as you've done so well during your time here. So long as you carry love for another in your hearts, there is enough room in this world for each of you to be successful in your own way, with your own goals. Know that there is room for courage, room for hope, room for peace, and room for your dreams because within you and between you there is love.

Seated just behind you are the people who have always loved you. Today, you manifest their hopes and dreams for you. Today, you achieved what was planned for, what was worked towards, what was prayed for. Your achievement today is a symbol of the gratitude that you extend to them, honoring and thanking them for investing in and supporting you.

Within you

But most of all students, when your memories feel far away; when your nights are dreamless; and when you cannot find the ones you love and who love you; know that in your hearts you carry all these things and

that you are enough. Everything you need is within you. Every warm memory you've had; every dream you've ever held; every person who loves you is an inextricable part of who you are today. Within you is all the strength you need to do great things. Within you is all the joy and purpose you need to shine brightly in the world. That is who you are.

The fact that Hollins University is now a part of you means that wherever you go, whoever you encounter: we are there with you. We believe in you, and we honor you as you are. You are enough.

Class of 2022, on behalf of the trustees, faculty, staff and administration of the Hollins University, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve you. We cannot wait to see the magnificent things you will do in the world.