



## OpEd

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### **Speech delivered by Treven Warburton at THS Graduation, June 4, 2020**

June 5, 2020

#### **Thoughts: The river, ever-changing, and sailing your vessel**

Treven Warburton

*“You know, a dream is like a river. Ever changing as it flows. And the dreamer’s just a vessel that must follow where it goes. Trying to learn from what’s behind you, and never knowing what’s in store, makes each day a constant battle just to stay between the shores.”*

There is no better way to describe our experience for the last 13 years than how Garth Brooks so poetically explains it. The dream that has been our elementary, middle, and high school years has flown by. It went from being all picture books and coloring projects to math tests and speeches.

Change became a normal part of our life. The river always brought new surprises around every corner and never flowed through the same country twice. Our classes changed,

our school changed, our homework changed, and our friends changed, and we as the dreamers changed as well. The constant buffering of waves made it hard to breathe sometimes, but only while holding our breath beneath the surface could we be polished just like a rock in the river.

Homework, sports practices, and after school activities piled up so high that we could not see the way forward. Most days, we didn't even want to get out of bed. Amid this struggle to survive, we managed somehow to stay reasonably between the lines.

That is where we found our strength. Making it through the hard times allowed us to grow and showed us that we really could do it. Each new assignment tested our limits but also provided us with the tools needed to push forward.

*"Too many times we stand aside, and let the water slip away. 'Til what we put off 'til tomorrow has now become today. So don't you sit upon the shoreline and say you're satisfied. Choose to chance the rapids, and dare to dance the tide."*

How many late nights did we spend fighting to stay awake because we knew that tomorrow was the day our homework was due. All that time we spent procrastinating the inevitable was wasted.

So many things in life took precedence over doing homework and school, that all of a sudden, we ran out of time. Tomorrow became today too fast to savor. Our future became our present and our present became our past. The river stops for no one, and whether we choose to sail it or not, it will continue to flow on.

As it flows, the river takes with it our time and experiences. If we choose to sit at the edge of the water and watch, we lose precious moments that can never be returned.

The only thing we can do is to set sail today and not miss out on any more.

In the water we find the things that make us ourselves. We find our passions, our strengths, our weaknesses, and our accomplishments. The river takes us forward, but we have to choose to let it do so. No one ever got anywhere by standing still.

*“And there’s bound to be rough waters and I know I’ll take some falls. But with the good Lord as my captain, I can make it through them all.”*

As we have well learned this year, sometimes life doesn’t go as planned. Sometimes, it takes a bend that we are not ready to take, and that is the risk of being a dreamer.

We know it. There is no way around it. No matter where we choose to go in life, someday, we will find a wave that is too big for us to sail ourselves. But the good news is, we do not have to sail it alone, and nor have we up to this point.

Our teachers were there every step of the way with us, trying to pass on their knowledge and wisdom during the short years they had to teach us.

Even now that we are leaving high school, there are so many people in our lives that care about us, even if we don't know it.

They are our captains. They are those who have sailed these waters before and understand how we feel. Our captains could be family members, friends, our community, or even our God. No matter who we choose to be our captains, they will help us navigate the occasionally treacherous waters.

*“I will sail my vessel ‘til the river runs dry. Like a bird upon the wind, these waters are my sky. I’ll never reach my destination if I never try, so I will sail my vessel ‘til the river runs dry.”*

The only time your river will ever run dry is when you stop dreaming. When you decide that the reward is not worth the risk.

But once you start dreaming again, you can choose to sail your vessel once more. That is your choice. No one can make that decision for you.

So here's my challenge to you, class of 2020: sail your vessel, even if it seems like the hardest thing in the world. Find your dream and follow it. Live it. Persevere through those hard times, because you already know they will come. Remember to find your captains and keep them close, so when your strength fails, they can lift you up and lead you.

I would like to thank all the parents, teachers, and friends for helping us through our schooling. Without your constant good influence, many of us may not have made it through.

Thank you again for being there for us.

Congratulations Class of 2020!!!! We made it!!!

Essay length: ~925 words