

WILSON COLLEGE 7, MAY 13, 2018

Hello everybody,
My name is Jane Condon, if you like me.
If you don't like me, my name is Dr. Barbara Mistick.
Give it up for your President!

Today is Mother's Day
I want every graduate to stand up, look at your mom and say,
"Thanks, Mom!" It's supposed to be HER day.
(Who the heck schedules an event on Mother's Day?!)
But today is YOUR day graduates.
Give it up for the Wilson College Class of 2018!!!
Let me tell you—there is no better present that you could give your mother...
Except maybe winning the lottery and buying her a house.
Or a red convertible. Moms like red convertibles.
Let's have a round of applause for all the dads, too.
And the grandparents.

I was asked what the title of my speech was going to be and I said,
"What I've Learned From Comedy."
But it's really "Great Quotations, What I've Learned From Comedy,
And What I've Learned From Your Class."
I do believe in QUOTES. I have file folders filled with inspirational QUOTES.
This is embarrassing but I have boxes in my basement filled with file folders filled
with quotes.

One of your own President Mistick's favorite quotes comes from legendary
investor Warren Buffett, "Hang out with people better than you and you cannot
help but improve."
I also like her other favorite quote, "If there's no wind...row!"
And as for today she might say, "If there's rain...row!"

Now I want to share five of my all-time favorite quotes.

“Be yourself; everyone else is taken.”

That’s from Oscar Wilde

Winston Churchill said,

“We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

Robin Williams, one of my favorite comics ever, said,

“You're only given a little spark of madness. You mustn't lose it.”

And listen hard to hockey star Wayne Gretzky.

“You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.”

The last of the five quotes is from a cartoon I wrote.

A mother and son are standing in the hallway of a hospital, outside grandpa’s room. The mother says to her son.

“Grandpa’s very ill, dear. Now go in there and ask him his PIN numbers.”

Here’s some ADVICE I GIVE TO MY KIDS (2 boys) ALL THE TIME,

I tell them, Marry someone you can talk to. If you get married.

You don’t have to get married. Try to find someone nice.

Nice is underrated. Nice and positive.

And if at all possible, could you find someone who laughs at mommy’s jokes?

I also tell my kids

You can’t always control the world.

But you can choose your attitude--whether to be positive or negative.

YOU can make a ZONE OF KINDNESS wherever you go.

Bring light into a room. I don’t care if it’s a smile, a laugh,
a compliment, a nod. Kindness is contagious like laughter.

Spread it wherever you go. Make a lot of it. We need it.

And I want you to promise me, everyone here, not just the graduates,
Every day going forward, you'll do something for someone else.

If you have kids, you're already doing that. Check. Done.

Every day, I want you to promise me, you'll do something for yourself.

Take a bath, a hot shower.

Do yoga, exercise.

Look in the mirror and say, "I'm a good person."

And if you can't say that, fix it.

Also?

Live abroad if you get the chance.

You will learn from other cultures.

I know we have people from 18 countries here at Wilson.

I hope you have learned from them.

I was lucky enough to live in Japan for five years.

The Japanese, they really, really listen. I can't do that. But it's a goal.

Now I have a second group of five all-time favorite quotes. These are from two comedians. The first two from Joan Rivers. The next three from the winner of the American Comedy Award, Wendy Liebman.

But first Joan Rivers. She says,

"I've had so much plastic surgery, when I die they will donate my body to Tupperware."

Also--

"I hate housework! You make the beds, you do the dishes and six months later you have to start all over again."

The next three are from my friend, one of the best comics out there and one of the nicest comics working today, Wendy Liebman.

She says,

“I go running when I have to. When the ice cream truck is doing sixty.”

“I’ve been on so many blind dates, I should get a free dog.”

And this is my favorite,

“I went to the 30th reunion of my preschool. I didn’t want to go, because I’ve put on like a hundred pounds.”

The 3rd group of my five all-time favorite quotes?

The first four are from someone I love and adore, she’s my hero, the actress, comedian and one of the stars of “Grace and Frankie” on Netflix-- Lily Tomlin .

Lily says,

“Why is it that when we talk to God we’re said to be praying but when God talks to us we’re schizophrenic?”

Lily also said--

“I always wanted to be somebody, but now I realize I should have been more specific.”

And--

“The road to success is always under construction.”

And—

“I always wondered why somebody doesn’t do something about that. Then I realized that I was somebody.”

Which reminds me of the fifth quote, by anthropologist Margaret Mead. (This is the first quote I ever put up on my refrigerator.)

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that has.”

And the last group of my five all-time favorite quotes starts with rocker Kurt Cobain of Nirvana. He says,

“Wanting to be someone else is a waste of who you are.”

Another rocker, Warren Zevon, wisely said on the Letterman Show, “Dave, enjoy every sandwich.”

You English majors may recognize the author of the next words.

“And this above all to thine own self be true. And it shall follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Also

“Clothes make the man.”

That was my Aunt Rose, because she was a high school English teacher quoting Polonius’s advice to his son Laertes in Hamlet, written by William Shakespeare

Here’s another famous saying:

“Turn the other cheek” (That’s what I always heard in church growing up). But my Aunt Rose said. “Unless it’s a bully.” She also said, “You have to stand up to a bully.”

And the fifth quote?

“A ship in port is safe. But that’s not what ships are made for.”

That’s Vice-Admiral Grace Hopper
who invented the computer language COBOL

SO HERE’S WHAT I’VE LEARNED FROM COMEDY

There has been a trending hashtag on Twitter
#whatilearnedfromcomedians

A traditional show has an opener, a middle act, and a headliner.
They each do 20, 30, 40 minutes.
Everyone wants to be a headliner. It’s good to be ambitious.
Reach for the stars. Aim high.

But it's also good to be a team player,
to be collaborative, to play well with others.
And to pay your dues.
Tennis player Stan Smith was asked how he won Wimbledon.
And he said, "A game at a time."

Don't be afraid to bomb. To fail. TAKE CHANCES!
Those bad situations make you faster, better, stronger.

HERE'S MY FAVORITE BOMBING STORY

I did a big conference. 1500 people.
A New Year's Eve show in Charleston, SC ten years ago.
I said how I love the TV show "24".
Very popular back then. With Kiefer Sutherland.
I loved Chloe, I identified with her. She was a geeky girl, too.
I said, "I think Chloe should be married to Jack (Kiefer, the star).
I know she's married to Morris.
But what if something were to happen to Morris?"
Well, there were crickets. You could have driven a truck through the silence.
I said, "Oh I guess you don't watch the show." And I moved on.
This man came up to the stage afterwards and said, "I really like 24."
I said, "Sir, I think it's you, me, your wife and my son."
And he said, "Well, I'm the Executive Producer."
And I said, "Well, why did you kill off Michelle in Season 2?"
He laughed and I said, "You know I could be a CTU
(counter terrorism unit) analyst. My dad was FBI.
You should have me on your show."
And he said, "I should." And he did.
I am in the next to last hour of the series finale saying,
"How do you want it coded? Yes, ma'am!"
(It's really one line but I made it two.)

Now this next advice may be specific to comedy but...

Never stay in the comedy condo. They don't change the sheets.

Laugh at the boss's (or in my case the booker's) jokes.

Don't be dishonest but help people feel good about themselves.

Help others. I put someone on my show. And they put me on their show.

I do believe that what goes around comes around.

I help them, they help me.

Sometimes I get nothing out of it. But I still give and you know why.

Because GIVING FEELS GOOD.

I think it releases endorphins, just the way laughter does.

Be generous. Tip the waitress. Tip the bartender.

Write thank you notes.

I became a comedian late in life.

My husband calls America the "Land of Second Chances."

The truth is that America is the land of 2nd, 3rd and 4th chances.)

I was 37 years old before I found out what I wanted to do in life.

Most of you are around 22. You have 15 years to find what you want to do.

So I'm pretty sure you can beat my timeline..

Which leads me to the big question, for women and men,

WHAT ABOUT KIDS? Best thing I ever did. Hardest thing I ever did.

My goal was to be a vice-president of something before I had kids.

Didn't work out.

I had the kids, but THEY became MY MATERIAL! I like to say in my act:

"I have two boys. Otherwise everything's fine."

"So much I don't know about boys. Like why would anybody want to blow their nose into a boarding pass. Why?"

And parents? I know how you feel. It's tough being a parent.
You ever notice how you always worry about the other kid being the bad influence on your kid. It's always the OTHER kid.
Then it turns out that YOUR kid is THAT kid.
YOUR kid is the biter or the bully or the keg distributor for North America."

The kids have all these dating apps like Tindr, Bumble, OkCupid.
I'd like someone to come up with some dating apps for older people like, "I can drive at night." Or "I bought my burial plot and there's room for you."

I think everyone wants to know how do you get big?
How do you get famous?
If I'm lucky, there might be someone in the audience here today who can make me big.
Probably not. But you never know.
Here's the deal. The BEST advice I can give you.
YOU BE THE SOMEONE WHO MAKES YOURSELF BIG.
YOU BE THE ONE WHO PICKS YOU!
Why wait around for someone else?
MAKE IT HAPPEN!
You want to start a business—go on Kickstarter or IndieGoGo or GoFundMe. Most businesses start with less than \$10,000.
Just try. For goodness sakes, try.

And be proud of yourself today. And every day.
You know how you got here to graduation day? Hard work, discipline.
All those final exams, all those mid-term papers, all those keg parties.
You dated princes. You dated trolls.
But you survived it all.
You are now college graduates—only 33.4% of all Americans are,
according to the Census Bureau.

Before I go, I want to talk to you about WHAT'S NEXT?
I got some ideas from your fellow graduates.

Marquise Beckett

Basketball player, environmental studies major (twin of Martez—also graduating today) is getting Latin Honors.

Part of the first coeducational class at Wilson.

His favorite quote is from Michael Jordan: “Obstacles don’t have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don’t turn around and give up.

Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it.”

Ashley Horn is a Resident Assistant, 4-year varsity softball player and President of the Diversity Team.

She said, “What do I want out of life? I want to make my family proud,

Give my little sister someone to look up to,

And lastly, make myself proud.

I want to accomplish things that will better the lives around me.”

Another Resident Assistant came to Wilson from Vietnam

Hong Nguyen (WIN). She was crowned May Queen a few weeks ago.

Gorgeous voice, President of Muhibbah which brings international speakers to campus.

And her parents are here today **all the way** from Vietnam.

Why did she choose Wilson? She says, “The small class size, the beautiful campus, the professors *and* the scholarship. Everyone is so friendly.”

What does she want out of life? “A few years ago, I’d say to be successful and famous. Now I also want to be happy out of everything life has to offer.”

Cierra Valentine is graduating today.

President of the Senior Class, an accounting major,

A member of the Single Parents Scholar program,

she’s graduating with honors.

Her 6-year-old son Jeremiah is the light of her life.

And her favorite quote is from Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

She says, “I want to live a life of service.”

Last person I'm going to quote from?

Also a member of the Single Parents Scholar program with her daughter Kaylee.

Michele Rogers

Double majored in psychology and environmental sustainability.

She's going back to Massachusetts for grad school.

Her career goal is to become a High School Adjustment Counselor.

She wants to help teenagers who may not be receiving the attention they need. And you know why? She says, because someone played a role like that in her life. Says Michele,

"I want to help save the lives of teenagers struggling with mental health disorders. I want to raise my daughter to be a strong compassionate woman. I want to live my life with no regrets."

And her favorite quote?

"Unless someone like you cares a **whole** awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." These are the wise words of Dr. Seuss.

I'd been told that your class, the class of 2018, was lively and fun.

But after hearing from a few of your classmates

I now know you are a CARING and DETERMINED group.

So Class of 2018, we are forever connected.

Friend me on FB, Twitter, Insta. And if you ever need anything at all, I hope you get in touch with Dr. Barbara Mistick.

She's a college president. She's written a book. She has an MBA.

I'm just a comedian. What can I do?

But I will always cheer you on in my heart.

In conclusion, take your education,

what you've learned here in the classes, the dorms, on the playing fields.

And use it wisely. Use it kindly.

Not everyone has been given the gift of a college education.

But today? CELEBRATE.

I hope you will be filled with love for yourself, your family and friends, for all the world. Lastly, I hope you have a great lunch.

I wish you lots of laughs in your life.

Remember, enjoy every sandwich.

Thank you for giving me a Happy Mother's Day!

