Salutatorian Remarks

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Mr. Karsten, Br. Thomas, member of the Administration, Faculty, Parents, Friends and Fellow Graduates

In a sudden moment of insight, I finally figured it out. I knew what I would talk to you about. Today, I will talk to you about gifts.

This idea came to me because of a music box. Years ago, my mother immigrated to this country, and one of the few things she carried with her was her own music box, given to her by her mother, my grandmother. Now as I prepare to go far from home myself, my mother has given me a music box, so that no matter where I am, I will always have something to remember her by. While this physical, solid gift holds a great deal of significance to me, the greatest gift that my mother has ever given to me has been herself. At the end of the day, all I will ever need to do to remember her, to remember any member of my family, is to look at myself in the mirror. Staring into this metaphorical reflection, I see the people, gifts that make me up. I see my mom and dad, my abuelos and abuelitos... my tías and tios... a childhood friend... And, in this reflection, finding its own place after four years, I now see Molloy.

I once heard a teacher say that the most common phrase she hears after someone visits Molloy is that it’s like a “family.” Skeptical at first, I did not agree. “Family” seemed to be a very strong word, but, after four years here, I now see the truth in that description.

In this school I’ve made my closest friends.

They are the people that I spend a better part of my day with simply because we have chosen each other. They are the ones that I call late at night without hesitation. They are the ones who were with me when I opened my college letters. They are the ones that can tell what I’m thinking with frightening accuracy, who make me laugh effortlessly, who give me their advice, their empathy without hesitation, whom I would be lost without.

In this school I’ve had teachers who see the act of teaching as more than just a profession. I’ve had a teacher that came into school early for a month to help his class review for an AP test. I’ve had a teacher who gave up his free period to help me improve a narrative. I’ve had a guidance counselor that has refused to believe there isn’t enough space for someone to sit in his overcrowded office. I’ve had a teacher who not only went over countless college essays with me but helped me write this very speech.

The uniqueness of Molloy is not that it simply offers the gift of an education. What makes Molloy great, what makes it more than just a school, is that it offers the gifts of friendships. It offers the gifts of teachers who genuinely care for their students. It offers the gift of a different kind of family. While our experiences may differ, I am sure that when each and every one of us looks into our own mirror, we do not only simply see ourselves, but the afterimages of all the people who have brought us to this day.

We all have our own sets of family, friends, and teachers who have supported us, inspired us, and understood us. When we look back at our years at Molloy, it will be these people who will
come to mind. Because of them we will smile. Because of them that we will have stories to tell. Because of them we will have a greater understanding of who we are and what we can and will achieve.

So, today, as we celebrate one of our greatest accomplishments, let us remember that the greatest gift we have ever given and ever received is each other. Thank you.