

Opening Remarks by Jonathan Pappalardo

Good morning, everyone. As I sit here today, exactly ten years have passed since I finished my first year as a student at Colby-Sawyer. Ten years since I was first welcomed into this unique and special community up on the hill, the moment when I just began to realize how much Colby-Sawyer would truly enrich my life.

But that beautiful week in May is not where my Colby-Sawyer story begins. It didn't begin at convocation or on the New Student Trip. It began like most students, as a high school junior, during a marathon month of touring college campuses. I visited Colby-Sawyer at the end of a long week, when drizzle and fog engulfed a cool April morning. I remember walking around dazed, but excited. While I had not yet made a final decision on a college, I knew Colby-Sawyer was firmly at the top of my list.

I decided to make Colby-Sawyer my home. After five more visits, including an overnight in Rooke sleeping on a senior's

couch, I had no idea just how “right” that decision was. As an only child, I had no perspective on college life, so I took for granted how freely the president walked around and greeted students by name. I took for granted how easily I could host a radio show and write for the newspaper during my first semester. I took for granted how incredible it was to have these opportunities available to me so early on. I took for granted that this practice isn’t customary, much less encouraged, at most colleges.

What I’ve never taken for granted is just what Colby-Sawyer means to me. When I sum up my experience, I always come back to one word: community. I don’t define a place based on its physical location, no matter how picturesque it may be. I define a place based on the people who comprise the institution. For me, the community of Colby-Sawyer goes far beyond my fellow classmates and friends. It extends to the relationships I cultivated with the faculty, staff, alumni and friends who have left, and continue to leave, an indelible mark on my life. I think about MB and how he forever changed how

I watch movies and television shows. I think about the senior staff, who were always available when I needed quotes for an article. I think about a community of people dedicated to the common goal of learning and imparting life experiences, sharing and shaping values that have prepared me for life's challenges. And significantly, I think about everyone in this room, with diverse backgrounds and experiences, applying their skills to meet the challenges we've shared together during this profound period of transition.

Whenever new trustees join the board, Robin always says serving in this way will be one of the best experiences of your life. I couldn't agree more. To be on the board during this critical juncture for Colby-Sawyer has been phenomenal. I have grown both personally and professionally from being a part of these discussions and decisions. I have learned how to critically evaluate a person's job performance without my personal feelings getting in the way. I've learned that even at this level, with our backgrounds and expertise, we don't always have the answer but that working together toward a

common goal we make progress. I've also learned, or at least had reinforced, that we're all human and that's more than okay.

In closing I just want to thank everybody, past and present, that has played a role in shaping my Colby-Sawyer experience. I have never, for one second, second-guessed my decision to come here and I have everyone I've met along the way, including all of you, to thank for that. It's an honor to be a part of this community and I look forward to watching and helping Colby-Sawyer grow and prosper in the years and decades to come. Thank you.