



Fruitport graduate receives U. of M. award

by Mary Weimer

Emily Hoffman, a 2012 Fruitport High School graduate, has been selected to receive the Maize & Blue Award during the commencement exercises at the University of Michigan-Flint in May.

The Maize & Blue Award is the University's highest undergrad award and is presented to no more than 13 graduates at the May and December commencement ceremonies. The commencement student speaker is chosen from the group of award winners.

Students who have a 3.75 overall GPA in their last 58 credit hours at the beginning of their last semester are eligible to be nominated for the award. Once the list of eligible students is determined, the academic departments are asked for nominations from that list. Nominations are submitted to the Scholarships, Awards and Special Events Committee, and that committee elects the award winners from the nominees.

Emily is receiving a Bachelors of Business Administration Marketing with a minor in communications. She has lived in Flint the last four years to complete her BBA. Emily is involved in Entrepreneurs Society, a member of the tennis club, Golden Key International Honor Society, Beta Gamma Sigma, and volunteers at her church, tutoring, and at Carriage Town Ministries. She has held three internships throughout her college career.

This is the speech Emily gave to the committee. She was chosen as an alternate student speaker.

"First of all, congratulations goes out to all University of Michigan-Flint graduates of 2014. I know each and every one of you has worked extremely hard to be sitting here today and will gladly flip your tassels to the right momentarily.

"My speech today will reflect on a topic very much discussed, but hardly understood: Purpose. Everyone wants one, but many do not know what theirs is or consists of. It is much like that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, always spoken about and never really seen or held. Some would say a figment of the imagination.

"I am going to begin with a scripture reading and then a personal story. 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.' A purpose is the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists. My purpose lies within the plans my Heavenly Father has laid out for me. The purpose of each one of you will be different, depending on your circumstance, religious affiliations, and so forth, but regardless, everyone must possess a purpose to truly live.

"Now to the story. When I was still in my mother's womb, my umbilical cord was wrapped tightly around my neck. My head was purple and as we approached closer and closer to my due date, a bit of life was taken from me each day. My mother, who was 8.5 months pregnant, was walking out to the entryway to feed the dogs. She reached inside the dog food bag and a ground squirrel jumped out at her and scared her into labor. If I would have been born at my scheduled cesarean section date, then I would have been dead. To date, that is the only ground squirrel to ever have been in the house, over 23 years now. Whenever I am feeling a bit unsuccessful or like I want to quit, I am reminded of my birth. I am here for a reason, as are each and every one of you. We are here to fulfill our purpose. One of my favorite professors said in lecture one day, "Without purpose one is dead." I began to mull over that statement throughout the class and into the weekend.

"Now that we have finished our bachelor's [degrees] we must continue to live with purpose. Whether our next step is finding the perfect job, continuing on to graduate school, moving up with the same company, or so forth, we must always have our reason for our actions in mind.

If you are like me and are looking for that perfect job, I encourage you not to take the first opportunity given to you. Look at the company's mission and vision statement and ponder if that is a company that you want to be a part of. And when you do go to your job, do not simply punch in and out on a time card. All projects and tasks need to be completed with purpose."

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