

Alec Birmingham
Senior Open House Address

My name is Alec Birmingham and I would like to welcome you here. I welcome you to the Covington Latin School, but really, I welcome you to the place that has become my home and my family these past five years. As students, there is no doubt in our minds that this place of advancement and excellence has founded within us a sense of confidence and readiness for the world to come. Personally, the Latin School has opened my eyes to what I wish to pursue, and to what is ultimately important to me. As a Catholic institution second to none, CLS has revealed to me the value of spirituality in my life, and I have thus become more active as a child of God. On an academic standpoint, no place could have better prepared me for a promising college experience. Among so many other things, CLS has taught me that involvement is the key to open a successful future. And so during my CLS experience, I have participated in five years of student council (of which I am now the president), two years of boy's varsity soccer, two years of peer counseling, four years of ski club, four different school plays (including one lead role), five total A.P. classes, one year of cheerleading, two years on the Junior Engineering and Technical Society, two years of bowling club, one of pontifical serving, and one year on the school's Pro-Life club (of which I was a co-founder). These activities, among others, are only the ones I participate in through the school. I am also a near-Eagle scout, an enthusiastic volunteer, and was a passionate and nationally ranked gymnast for eight years. I am the kind of person that the Covington Latin School produces. We graduate as experienced individuals well-qualified for all that lies ahead. As you will see for yourselves through your own sons and daughters, "Leaders start here." Through present and past experience, we have become prepared for the future.

I have found that by challenging ourselves, we allow for a wholly fulfilling and rewarding experience in all that we may do. Just this past summer, I took upon myself perhaps the greatest physical challenge I have yet seen in my life. I led a group of eight people, including adults, through 100 miles of the Philmont Scout Range in Cimmaron, New Mexico. We roughed it for two weeks straight as we hiked to the summits of three different mountains with 50-pound packs on our backs the entire way. The struggle was intense, but the sense of achievement we acquired for having completed it was so much greater. I look back upon that experience with pride, realizing that it was enthusiasm and a positive outlook that enabled my crew and me to enjoy ourselves and even overcome ourselves. I use my adventure to Philmont to give insight to the actions I make today. I grew from my experience, as we all do. Like any adventure, the high school career at CLS is an experience, but to say that I grew from it would be an immense understatement. Covington Latin defined the person who I am today; Let me also say that I take pride in being that person. I take pride in this school.

One of my favorite quotes was said by the author Napoleon Hill. I believe that it best composes my outlook on life: "Enthusiasm, if fueled by inspiration and perseverance, travels with passion, and its destination is excellence." I like it particularly because it is a metaphor: Enthusiasm is a means of transportation capable of taking us places, taking us to our goal of excellence. But it is fueled by our own power: our inspirations

and our perseverance. This fuel is used to drive ourselves through the path of life even when the road gets rough, but when the path is smooth, we are called to enjoy it. I relate this quote to my Latin School experience, where a positive outlook based on my beliefs, my friends, and my determination drives me through the many surmountable challenges that CLS throws my way. It drives me down the path which CLS lays out for me and to my ultimate goal of excellence. Surely, the path of the Covington Latin School is the path of excellence.

My family first attended the Latin School in 1944, and even then, says my Grandpa, it had the same defining qualities and doctrine that it embodies now. Only, now it's co-educational. A considerable attribute is the size of the Latin School, because it could not be better suited for your sons and daughters. We have less than 250 students here, allowing for a more personalized relationship with the faculty and with each other. I said before that the people in this school have become my family over the years. I truly do believe that, and will for many years to come. I appreciated the size so much, actually, that I chose as my number one college choice the University of Richmond, Virginia: a university which has fewer than 3000 undergraduate students. At the University of Richmond, I intend to utilize the awesome undergraduate research opportunities in the fields of biomedicine and biochemistry for the creation of new medicines. Also, I plan to attend a groundbreaking leadership studies class there; the first of its kind. I look forward to my college experience, knowing that CLS has well-prepared me for it. I go forth with confidence.

Preparing for the future is vital, but living the adventure of the path to it is necessary for personal growth. The Covington Latin School guides her students along the road of achievement, self-confidence, and inevitably, self-satisfaction. This road is composed of a superior education cloaked beneath unforgettable memories and great times spent with friends. I urge you to let your sons and daughters experience what I have experienced here at the Latin School; to become a leader of tomorrow and a distinguished scholar of today.

Thank you. Please enjoy your visit to my home.