

Student Lasallian Commencement Address
December, 2008
Presented by: Gina Salvatore

would go to school during the week and come home every weekend. As the semester progressed, however, these girls became my friends. We were from all walks of life: each with a different story, but the one thing we had in common was our association with each other and the Lewis community. I learned things about culture and life that couldn't be taught in any Lewis classroom. These girls, these new friends, became my family away from home. We shared birthdays, clothes, laughs, tears, late night study sessions, and much of our time at Lewis together. Just like any family, these girls were my support system. My family at home supported me during my transition into college. My family at school and home supported what was about to become my next transition in life.

Many of us can relate to having that one faculty or staff member who served as a mentor. For me, that person was Dr. Arthur Horton. Dr. Horton told me "life was about choices". I will always respect and admire the profession of nursing, but it was not my calling. Therefore, I know I made the right choice when I changed my major to Social Work. The professors at Lewis have given each of us the foundation to take from every class a lesson to use as we begin our professional lives. My final semester at Lewis I spent interning at Guardian Angel Community Services as a Sexual Assault Victim Advocate. Every time I get paged to a hospital, I know there is a victim waiting on the other side of the hospital door for help. The real world can be an intimidating place for a student. Opening that hospital door is stepping into the real world. I do it day after day, but my instructors gave me the confidence to know I will be okay with whatever comes at me when I open that door.

We all come from diverse backgrounds. Some of us might be transfer students from a community or state college. Some of us might be graduating earlier than expected. Others, like myself, may be graduating late. Some might be going onto graduate school, while others may

already have a job lined up. Our stories may be different, but we're all associated with Lewis because of the values developed in us by the faculty and staff through the spirit of the Lewis mission. This association has caused us to form a close-knit community within Lewis University that has given us friends who became a family, teachers who became mentors, and classmates who challenge us to achieve excellence. We should all be so lucky to have a community like this at Lewis University.

Graduation brings great responsibility. Saint John Baptist De La Salle dedicated his life to serving others. We, too, are called to contribute to society. Whether we serve as social workers, lawyers, doctors, nurses, accountants, teachers, journalists, police officers, we all have the opportunity –

