

Good morning Exeter,

And, thank you Principal Rawson and Janney for your kind introductions.

And, many thanks to the Awards Committee for this recognition. Having served on the Committee in the past, I know you had many wonderful candidates who you could have easily chosen.

So, it's a great honor to be selected as the 92<sup>nd</sup> recipient of the Founder's Day Award.

\*\*\*\*\*

In 1976, the first Founder's Day Award recipient was Hamilton Bissell, fondly known as "Hammy". I met Hammy in Gilman House during one of my early post-graduation visits to the Academy. When Hammy was serving as Director of Scholarships, he did his best to fulfil our slogan, 'Youth from Every Quarter'. This represents the Academy's goal to reach out to as many qualified students as possible. Hammy focused on recruiting newspaper boys, because he believed these boys, primarily from low-income families, would be highly motivated to succeed at the Academy.

His intuition proved to be correct.

Like Hammy, many of the past Founders' Day Award recipients played important roles in my life.

\*\*\*\*\*

Recent events have led me to carefully consider, where we are now as a national and world community and in what direction we are heading.

We often look to the past to evaluate our present. Therefore, in the spirit of identifying the foundation of who we are, I would like to offer, what I hope is not a radical concept. That is, each of us were born free; each of us were created equal; each of us was born with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Of course, these last words are familiar declarations from the United States Constitution.

But, let me go a step further to punctuate what I'm really trying to say. With or without the Constitution of the United States or any similar document from any other nation.... We are all born free.

Freedom is inalienable or, for those of us of faith would say, freedom is God given. No human can take it from us.

Borrowing words of the Apostle Paul, Freedom is such a natural gift that neither death nor life, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from that freedom. It is our most precious individual gift.

Of course, throughout history, many were denied the enjoyment and the fulfillment of their freedom, no less so than here in the United States.

There are beautiful words in the Preamble to the Constitution, describing our collective goal "of a more perfect union". Many individuals sacrificed their lives to secure our Freedom... But, what about the enslaved, the disenfranchised, and the exploited?

\*\*\*\*\*

In my attempt to answer these questions, let's take a very brief look at the lives of two distinguished leaders from the same generation. George Washington, the most recognized Founder of our nation, and John Phillips, along with his wife Elizabeth, a Founder of the Phillips Exeter Academy.

As of today, George Washington and I will share this special date as he was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on April 30, 1789.

President Washington is one of the nation's preeminent personifications of freedom. Ironically, he controlled the lives of enslaved individuals, even though this was actually a result of his marriage to his wife Martha.

Slavery was a very ugly economic model used to exploit the hard work of individuals without compensation. Slavery required inhumane treatment in order to control those who dared to disobey or in any way resist.

Slavery was the ultimate cancel culture agent of that time. Birth names, traditional family units, educational opportunities and any real hope for true freedom were canceled.

Slavery was also the ultimate agent of censorship. Simple communication was denied. General information flow was negligible and the few personal letters that were attempted to be exchanged often fell subject to interception and destruction.

George Washington had an opportunity to make every effort to restore these freedoms. However, history shows that he was not willing to take that battle head-on. He did not find a path for those who were enslaved the same way he courageously laid a path for the freedom of the new Republic.

The guilt he must have experienced led him to establish the certainty in his final will that the enslaved under his control be granted the exercise of their freedom upon the death of his wife Martha. But Martha, under the category, "Sometimes, it takes a woman to do a man's job", opened the door to freedom a year prior to the former president's death.

This brings us to John Phillips. Like George Washington, through marriage he controlled the lives of several enslaved individuals.

Despite his Puritan orthodoxy, he did not overtly demonstrate the impulse to allow the enslaved to exercise their complete freedom.

John Phillips had a deep sense of piety and faith. He also believed strongly in the promotion of education and demonstrated his very charitable compassion through his philanthropy.

Even with these noble characteristics, he did not completely address the injustice of enslavement. I say "completely" because in his will he wrote of his "black man" Corydon. His will stated, "Item, I give my man-servant" and he emphasized, "(Slave I have none) such part of my wearing apparel as my Executor shall think fit". Therefore, he did not identify the blacks of his household as enslaved. Given what we know about him, we can make the assumption that his intent was to demonstrate Christian charity.

Both George Washington and John Phillips eventually promoted the freedom of the enslaved through their final wills but could not fully muster this same act of charity during the course of their lives.

\*\*\*\*\*

So, how do we reconcile the dual nature of these two individuals? How can we celebrate their great deeds juxtaposed to their apparent unwillingness to fervently fight for the freedom of every human being?

I have been challenged with this question and have not really come to any one definitive conclusion.

However, In my readings regarding the Founding of Exeter in Laurence M. Crosbie's book, *The Phillips Exeter Academy A History*, I came across a simple passage that made a tremendous impact on my perspective of individuals, past and present.

In his attempt to view the actions of historical figures through the lens of time, Crosbie wrote, "***And yet, great are the contradictions of human nature.***"

***....And yet, great are the contradictions of human nature...***

And, I would also add my own words to this idea, "Great are the inconsistencies of human nature."

A great national leader can play an extraordinary role in the formation of a new nation dedicated to freedom yet deny that same freedom to certain individuals for personal gain.

A dedicated philanthropist can exercise his passion for education through the founding of fine institutions of learning yet not leave a record of speaking forcefully about the exploitation of enslavement.

Contradictions..... Inconsistencies..... Human..... each of these characteristics can be placed in the same category...“imperfection” ....

Of course, when you want a classical and timely world perspective on any question of significance, just look to an Exonian. My dear friend Nate Brown is a member of the Class of 1995 and was the first child to be admitted to the Academy who was born of two Exonian parents, Harold and Vivian Brown.

He recently wrote the following words regarding his positive attitude in light of recent disturbing events:

***“My optimism isn’t about selectively choosing evidence, but rather resisting the temptation to surrender to fear and disillusionment. It recognizes progress while still acknowledging how far we still must go. It allows us to celebrate the good, even when it falls short of the ideal.”***

\*\*\*\*\*

Unfortunately, in many ways today, we focus on how we fall short of the ideal rather than celebrating the good.

As in the past, the cancel culture, censorship and “Check the Box” Group Think have all been preventative agents creating roadblocks to our noble journey. Critical thinking, civil discourse, and fair and honest individual decision-making are under attack. We must look through the honest lens of informed discussion, compassion, and simple common sense.

Fortunately for the nation, the march toward the ideal and a more perfect Union served as a base of action for Abraham Lincoln. He recognized that a nation divided between a pro-slavery South and an anti-slavery North could not stand.

As the two sides eventually went to war and fought numerous bloody battles, he said during the Gettysburg address, ***“Now we are engaged in a great Civil War testing whether this nation or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated can long endure.”*** Over 623,000 souls were lost in battle and many more fell victim to war in the towns and roads along the way; Exonians included....

At the war’s end, President Lincoln knew the ideal would not be achieved without the full Implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation and the reunification of the South with the Northern States.

Lincoln was clear in his attempt to reunite the country in his 1865 Inaugural Address when he said,

***“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”***

In this spirit of unity, hope and charity for all, we can celebrate the good, even when its falls short of the ideal.

\*\*\*\*\*

Our mission here at the Academy is to maintain a healthy environment for future leaders, hopefully, even great leaders. Leaders can serve to make dreams come true. Great leaders serve to pave the road for others to make their own dreams come true and discover the true essence of their freedom.

We must all love the truth; embrace our past, study the unadulterated history of those imperfect humans that

lived before our time, and do this with the knowledge that they all exhibited the many contradictions and inconsistencies of human nature.

\*\*\*\*\*

As we look to discover who we are, we must first look in the mirror. Each of us represents the mosaic of thousands of years of humans in their pursuit and enjoyment of freedom.

We carry with us a part of those individuals who have touched our lives, directly or indirectly.

So, who am I?

- I am Chloe Gavin Beattie and Kim Welch, two of the wonderful women of the Great Class of 1972 and former Trustees who served as pioneers for all the girls who followed. We are currently celebrating 50 years of the rich history of coeducation at Exeter as well as all the achievements by women across this nation; in education, business, sports, the arts and sciences, and yes, in the office of the Vice President of the United States.

- I am also David Bohn from the Class of 1957 and the 2014 Founder's Day Award recipient. Little did I know that I would become the adopted Exeter Dad of his lovely and feisty Granddaughter Jocelyn Bohn Guthrie, a member of the class of 2011.

- I am Bert and Lorna Hill, parents of two Exonians Eli and Matt. They served tirelessly as volunteers along with many other parents during my term with the Northern California Regional Association and they still volunteer today.
- I am the European families who crossed the Atlantic with little but a dream of a better life. They traveled an ocean away from the indignities of the Holocaust, repressive regimes, war, poverty, and ignorance.
- I am the Asian families who came to America, who worked diligently around the country, faced many abuses yet claimed their freedom and established true marks of courage and success.
- I am all of those families from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the many lands beyond our borders.
- I am the many individuals who left the safety of their homes to protect the lives of those they cherish. Thank you for your service.
- I am the children who bravely tell their parents that "something is different about me; I don't seem to be the same as other kids; I just don't belong". I am also those parents who say, "Sweetie, everything will be OK, let's sit down and talk."
- I am my wonderful and beautiful wife Denise who came to America from Germany to seek a new life and who reminds me frequently that red blood flows through the bodies of everyone.

Through my own veins flows blood from Africa, Europe and Native American soil.

Finally, I am Alan Richard Jones,

- A Christian and child of the living God

- A compassionate conservative who believes that if you feed individuals fish, they'll eat for a day. But if you teach individuals how to fish, they can eat for a lifetime
- An Exonian and former Trustee who has promised that above all other responsibilities are the minds and morals of each student; that Goodness and Knowledge are the noblest of character and that *non sibi* (not for oneself) enables each of us to fulfill our duty of doing unto others as we would do for ourselves.

\*\*\*\*\*

Former instructor Jack Herney accompanied me on my initial journey as a volunteer for the Academy in 1976 when we visited a diverse group of students at a Brooklyn, New York middle school.

Now, 45 years later, I am privileged to serve as Co-Chair of the Exeter Fund with the brilliant and always charming Nadia Saliba of the Class of 1995. She is truly a great teammate.

I am also privileged to serve on the Great Class of 1972 Major Gift Committee with my long-time partner, John Warner and our fearless leader Ray Mendez.

This honor I receive today belongs to all of my classmates who have given so much time and effort to support each other and our Academy.

I've traveled around the country and even around the world with my dear friend and former Trustee Robert Ho to meet the many Exonians who make the Academy such a special place.

There are so many people to thank like my coaches, teammates, the boys of Soule Hall, faculty members, staff and administrators. Please know how important you have been in my life.

Of course, I must express a great deal of gratitude for the tremendously talented people who are the Advancement Team of Gilman House. There are too many to name individually, but without you, I would not be here today.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now, I would like to leave you with this blessing:

***May the love and good deeds that stir in your heart be your guide.***

***May you never be content with the ordinary, or the popular, or that which is easy.***

***Through your journey in life, may the Goodness and Knowledge that is in you always lift you up and may the spirit of non sibi advance your every step.***

***And above all else, may you always love, respect and seek the truth.***

\*\*\*\*\*

On behalf of the Jones family the Winter family and my great extended family, "Thank You for allowing me to have an experience like no other."

May God bless you always and may God bless the Phillips Exeter Academy.