

Just a few moments ago, Drew encouraged all of us to give thanks to those who have enabled us to reach this point in our lives. Drew mentioned parents, teachers, and close friends. These people are indeed worthy of our gratitude, but they are not the only ones. There are people who in the grand scheme, may seem unimportant, some might call them nobodies. But these individuals are just as deserving of thanks as those key players. These notable nobodies may have only been in our lives for a few moments, but they, too, brought us to where we stand today. This concept of a notable nobody occurred to me as I was reflecting upon one of those brief moments that remains with me to this day.

You see, at one point during junior year, I was going through a major slump. Some of the feelings I had been bottling and the pressures I was bearing really got the better of me. I began to sink back into a shell that I had been working so hard to shed. One day in English, I made a joke that I “probably wouldn’t amount to much” to a small group of people. It was the kind of self-deprecating joke that came from a half-serious place. Most my peers laughed, but Brandon Polanco offered a sort of rebuttal. Brandon told me that I couldn’t end up like that, because when he grew up and had a family, he wanted to use me as a role model for his children. Although I’m sure Brandon has forgotten about what he said to me that day; it is a compliment I will remember for the rest of my life. That single compliment helped me get out of the slump to finish the year better than ever.

While thinking about that day, I realized that I never actually told Brandon how much his comment meant to me and how appreciative I am for it. Furthermore, I thought of our graduation, and how Brandon and others like him, may no longer be a part of our lives after today.

So let’s add to the idea of thanking people. Instead of focusing on only the big players in our lives, like our close friends and family, we should also focus on our notable nobodies. These smaller players are people we might not speak to very often. They probably don’t know what they’ve done for us or just how thankful we are for their existence. Maybe these

people didn't mean to change our lives but through their presence made them just that much better.

We all owe some of our success to those notable nobodies who through the kindness and selflessness of their character, impact our lives in meaningful ways. We owe our gratitude to people like Cody Hinkle. I don't know Cody personally, but to Anthony "Sese" Walters, Cody was momentary hero. According to Anthony, during the summer leading up to his junior year, football conditioning (and the time and effort it was requiring) was becoming too much to bear. Anthony was considering quitting football all together. However, Cody encouraged him to stick with it and develop his talents. Sese might not have enjoyed the success of this past football season without Cody's words of encouragement.

There are other notables whose names we never even know. Joey Peischer would give thanks to a girl who he never officially met. Early on in sophomore year, Joey was the victim of bullying. One day while walking home after school, a group of bullies both verbally and physically attacked him. As he scrambled on the ground for his glasses, still enduring heckles from his assailants, a girl--who sits among you all today-- came to his defense. This girl not only made sure he was immediately ok, but she also walked him to the park and offered words of encouragement. Joey has not forgotten this moment and still remembers her face. He doesn't even know her name, but he is thankful for the role she played in his life.

The people mentioned here today are not the only notable nobodies who are worthy of thanks, far from it. In fact, I think we all have at least one person we would like to thank for their momentary support. Hopefully, we will all take time to thank these people, to tell them that they are in fact not an insignificant part of our lives, that they did make a difference.

In looking ahead for the class of 2013, I am neither a prophet nor a fortuneteller and cannot tell what trials and experiences await us. Instead, I can only offer a reminder. No matter what twists and turns life

brings us, no matter where we end up, whether that path starts by going off to the military, college, or the workforce, striving to be a better person will always be rewarding. Thus, my final challenge to the Class of 2013 is to go out and be the best person you can, be notable – even if you think nobody notices.

Congratulations to all of you and best of luck in your future. Thank you.