GRADUATION SPEECH BY STUDENT TIERA ROBINSON

Good morning President Torline, deans, faculty, distinguished guests, family, friends, and fellow graduates.

Behavioral scientist and best-selling author, Dr. Steve Maraboli encourages us to “Let today be the day we stop being haunted by the ghost of yesterday. Holding on [to] grudges, harboring anger and resentment are poisonous to the soul.” He continues, “Get even with people, but not those who hurt us, forget them, instead, get even with those who have helped us.”

I chose to matriculate into Baker College of Clinton Township because I knew what I wanted. I wanted a great higher education experience. I wanted to be treated like a human being. I wanted to be taught by men and women who experienced what they were teaching. I wanted a challenge and a chance to expand my brain. I wanted a rigorous curriculum with instructors who cared and understood what “life happens” really means.

I would like to thank all of the instructors for accommodating us—mothers, fathers, graveyard-shift workers, homeless, unemployed students, to the best of your power without doing so unethically. FOR THAT I THANK YOU!

Furthermore, I knew I needed extra help until I better understood what college life was really about. I knew what I was looking for. Baker College was where I received the tools I needed to succeed in the real work world. I knew I needed genuine greetings, as I tackled a seemingly far-fetched goal. I received such genuineness. FOR THAT I THANK YOU!

For four active years—I, just as many of you, have overcome hurdles—heartache, job loss, crisis, childcare issues, transportation issues, and even deaths. For me, not just a familial death, but unfortunately the death of my mother—my support system and my friend. Four years of such agony, and stumbling blocks did not stop me! Those hardships only built my endurance, immunity, and strength. All odds were against me, a welfare recipient—after losing my job due to my son’s medical emergency. I overcame such hardships.

Baker College appeared to me as hope; hope in my stereotypical, statistical situation—a single black teenage mother of three kids. By the way, did you know you were sitting next to me—whom society deemed a statistic?

I knew attending Baker would increase my confidence, self-esteem and drive, diminishing fears that held me captive. Attending Baker turned a young introverted adult into a more caring extrovert. I blossomed in its classrooms. I have watched many of you blossom as well. Most of us shed tears, for both disappointments and accomplishments. We were faced with many challenges. It was then we realized how capable we

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Congratulations Class of 2015

The graduates of Baker College of Clinton Township Class of 2015 gathered together for wonderful commencement ceremony on June 13th. Guests of the graduates, along with faculty and staff of the college, celebrated the achievements of these outstanding students. The proud graduates crossed the stage to receive their diplomas from Campus President Don Torline and members of the Board of Regents. There were 735 degrees awarded, which included masters, bachelors, associates, and certificates.

The Baker community salutes the graduates, as well as their family and friends who supported them in their accomplishments. It is an honor to have worked with you in reaching your educational goals. We look forward to hearing from you about your successes as you progress in your career. We will be here to help in the future, be it for employment assistance or to further advance your education.

Best wishes to the class of 2015! May your future dreams come true!

Commencement Program

- Procesional
- “Processional March”, A. Gulamant
- O Canada! and Star Spangled Banner
- Alyssa Ferri accompanied by Ken Kepler
- Invocation
- Rev. Lawrence Healy
- Welcome and Remarks
- Donald Torline, Campus President
- Recommendation of Faculty
- Dr. Laura Treanor, Vice President of Academics
- Presentation of the Class of 2015
- Donald Torline, Campus President
- Commencement Student Speaker
- Tiera Robinson, Bachelor of Human Services
- Presentation of Academic Awards
- Department Deans and Board of Regents
- Presentation of Diplomas
- Donald Torline, Campus President and Board of Regents
- Benedictions
- Rev. Lawrence Healy
- Recessional
- “Pomp and Circumstance”, Edward Elgar

Henry Lowe, Interpreter for Hearing Impaired
really were—surprising ourselves during the most stressful times of each quarter--mid-terms and finals. We did it--we passed those tests as well as many life tests that were presented as heightened pop quizzes.

SEE HOW CAPABLE WE ARE?

“If we can make it there we can make it anywhere”, reaffirm Jay-Z and Alicia Keys in the song, “Empire State of Mind.” We have done that—overcome personal barriers, student-centered barriers, and stumbling blocks of all kinds—preparing us to march toward a brighter future.

This is why I chose Baker, because I trusted that they would equip me with tools to accomplish my goals and become a better role model for my three kids. Thank you for such equipment: confidence to move forward; knowledge to challenge tough topics; experience to better deal with my cohorts; endurance to sustain in the real world and self-esteem to stand before you today.

I walked into Baker College as a disorganized, confused young adult student. Today, however, I am leaving through the same doors confident, full of life, energetic, capable and with my head held high.

Fellow graduates, keep focused, keep pressing your way forward--life is too short to entertain stumbling blocks. Do not let your current situation be your final position. There is much more to accomplish in your life, in your community and in this world. As long as you have life, breathe life into someone else--utilize whatever skills you can until you literally cannot press your way through anymore. Apply your talents and gifts wisely, for they are not to be hidden. As Steve Maraboli told us, let’s get even with the great people, who did well to us and spoke well of us. Revenge has never sounded so melodic.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! THANK YOU!
SPECIAL AWARDS

**Business / Technology**

Salvatore Biondo  
*Bachelor of Business Administration*  
*Accounting*

Allante Simmons  
*Associate of Applied Science*  
*Automotive Services Technology*

**Education**

Emily Tabor  
*Bachelor of Science in Education*  
*Elementary Teacher Preparation - Language Arts*

Jeremy Sutphin  
*Bachelor of Science in Education*  
*Elementary Teacher Preparation - Social Studies*

**Health Sciences**

Catherine Bingle  
*Associate of Applied Science*  
*Medical Assistant*

Nichole Kardas  
*Bachelor of Health Science*  
*Health Services Administration*

**Human Services**

Jakina Bailey  
*Associate of Applied Science*  
*Early Childhood Education*

Terrance Downey Jr.  
*Bachelor of Human Services*  
*Human Services*

**Outstanding Students**

Malcolm Gibson  
*Bachelor of Human Services*  
*Human Services*

Cedomir Stefanovich  
*Bachelor of Information Technology and Security*  
*Information Assurance*

**Lynnette M. Zaner Design Technology Award**

Mark Lawson II  
*Bachelor of Interior Design*  
*Interior Design*

“You cannot help but learn more as you take the world into your hands. Take it up reverently, for it is an old piece of clay, with millions of thumbprints on it.”

John Updike