

FROM THE EDITOR

This is my last letter as Editor-in-Chief. I should be honest and say this position should not have been handed down to me. My friends and professors know I am the worst speller, and I'm not the best when it comes to proper grammar and punctuation.

Just as I should have not been Editor-in-Chief, I probably should not be 9 days away from becoming a college graduate, because I nearly received a special diploma in high school. The state of Florida issues a special diploma to students with disabilities who were not able to meet the requirements of a standard diploma, or could not complete the required coursework necessary to the development of functional life skills.

I'm sure I'm not the only Montreat student who was faced with this option. Earning a special diploma does not necessary means that a person can't attend college, but it does make getting accepted to a college extremely difficult. Most colleges won't even allow a person with a special diploma to earn an accredited degree, or will exclude them from certain majors.

From grade school all the way to high school classes were tremendously challenging for me. The teasing from my peers was even worse. I cannot count the number of times a peer called me dumb or a teacher told me I wouldn't amount to much because of my learning disability. The sad thing is, I believed them.

Even today it's difficult to share that I have a learning disability. I spend more time trying to hide it. I hated the label of "learning disabled," and at times I was ashamed. I made sure I never marked "learning disability" on any forms the college or my professors might read.

In the end, I graduated with a standard diploma and finished my last year of high school in mainstream classes; I graduated with a 3.4 GPA and test scores good enough to have few colleges to pick from.

I will graduate from college 4 years later with a degree in communications and minors in theater and, ironically, English.

As I sit back and wonder how I've reached my goal of graduating college, I realized it's because of three things. First of all, God; through him all things are truly possible. Second my mother, Paula Faye, who made countless sacrifices for this day to happen. My third motivator was the willpower to attain my goal.

I cannot say enough how blessed I am to have reached this day. Let me put a college degree into perspective. About 85% of Americans graduate from high school; out of that, 60 percent or so attend college, but less than 30% ever hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

That said, college graduates still have a lot to learn, and are not guaranteed a job in their field, or even a job at all (especially in today's economy). Still, it's been shown that more jobs are available to college graduates. Studies also show that the average income of a high school graduate is \$28,700 a year, while holders of a bachelor's degree earn an average of \$53,800. In terms of lifetime income, a typical high school graduate might expect to earn of about \$940,000. By comparison, a typical college graduate could expect to earn \$1.8 million, almost twice as much. Of course, there is no job called "college graduate," so each person must find a specific job that works well for them.

So seniors, rejoice in your achievement! A college degree is valuable. Always continue to work hard to achieve your goals.



Arilicia E. Adkins

"As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

Proverbs 27:17

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E-mail us and let us know, we'd

love to

have your voice represented!

mcwhetstone@gmail.com

Montreat College Box 839
Montreat, NC 28757
(828) 669-8012, ext. 3675
mcwhetstone@gmail.com

The Whetstone
Montreat College's Student Voice

Writers	Photographers
Nathan Adams	Athletic Department
Arilicia Adkins	Amanda King
Eve Carlin	Carolina Leite
Athletic Department	Imari Scarbrough
Caleb Hofheins	
Amanda King	
Jared Nielsen	
Registrar's Office	
Winston Rheinbolt	
Dan Ruck	
Marlene Medefind Van-Brocklin	
Joshua VanDine	
Lucy White	

Thaaaaanx Martie!

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