

CLASS OF 2000

Many talked about the year 2000—Y2K—as if it were an important juncture for humanity. We spent much of the year leading up to it with one foot in the past—reflecting on how much we as a nation (or a culture or a species) had accomplished—and one foot in the future—envisioning a new era of progress in which we would vanquish problems like inequality, war and climate change.

Looking back, we can see that there was nothing magical about those four digits. Much has changed in the past fifteen years, but not THAT much. Many of us carry miniature computers in our pockets and purses, but we still call them phones. Maybe you have a hybrid car, but you still have to drive it yourself ... on the ground. We're still paying too much for coffee and too little to those who make it. We're STILL looking forward to the next Star Wars film!

Of course, this slightly cynical big-picture point of view looks hopelessly myopic on a day like today, when we gather with our friends and reflect on our own lives since the days when we called this campus our home. Fifteen years ago, diplomas in hand, our paths diverged, and there is *no doubt* that each of us has had life-altering experiences: a second or third degree, a career, a new city, an opportunity to serve, travel, marriage, parenthood. In countless ways we are changed people.

And yet, different as we are from our past selves and from each other, we share in F&M a place of common ground. We know the value of hard work. We know that every person has something to offer. We know that learning is a lifelong exercise. The education that we gleaned from our professors and from each other—inside the classroom and on the field, in front of an audience and behind a lab table, on the screen and on the page—will carry us forward in ways big and small. It's a good thing too, because that bright, shiny future that seemed so close in the year 2000 is still ours to make.