

Good evening. I am Susan Baldrige, Provost at Middlebury. A warm welcome to the class of 2019! Your 4 years at Middlebury College begin here. You most likely know already that this campus is a special place, even though you're just beginning to find your way among the buildings and discovering the beautiful views. And soon enough you will plot a more detailed and personalized map of this campus – your favorite study space, perhaps in the Abernethy Reading Room in Axinn or a nook in the Center for the Arts or one of the group study spots in McCardell Bicentennial Hall, looking out over the Adirondacks. You'll find your favorite place to relax, perhaps with a cup of coffee in Wilson Café, or sitting in the sunshine in the Organic Garden or walking the trail around the golf course. You'll find your favorite places to socialize –you'll have to ask your fellow students about those! But rest assured—the nooks and crannies and classrooms and dorms and rehearsal halls and athletic fields and expansive vistas this campus offers will soon feel like the comforting and inspiring geography of a larger home.

But as you get to know this place as yours, be aware that, come the end of May, this place will host other communities of learners: those attending the Summer Language Schools and the School of the Environment—respectively the oldest and the youngest incarnations of Middlebury's other programs. Moreover, you will also discover that the Middlebury ecosystem stretches not only through the summer, but far beyond this town in rural Vermont. There is another special place only twenty minutes away that some of you have already visited, up toward the crest of the Green Mountains: our Bread Loaf campus, where each summer the Bread Loaf School of English and the Bread Loaf Writers Conference bring together learners, writers, and teachers of the literary word. Drawing back farther (just imagine zooming out in Google Earth), you can see the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California, where graduate students develop professional skills to pursue careers and effect change in a global arena. Pull back even farther and you can see the many Middlebury programs that dot the globe, our Schools Abroad -- 36 sites in 16 countries -- where many of you will go to learn in other languages and experience other cultures. All of these places are part of Middlebury and offer additional opportunities to further explore the intellectual passions you develop here at the College.

So we are sitting at the nexus of a broader Middlebury map, one that represents – literally – a world of intellectual possibilities. But whether you choose to explore the far corners of that map or not, we are delighted to welcome you here to its center, this extraordinary College, rich with its history and traditions...the place you can now call home. We're very glad you're here.

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Now a few words about this evening's program: You will notice that students will be reading "Words on Wisdom" drawn from religious and secular traditions from around the world. In keeping with Middlebury's commitment to the importance of language study, they will read them in the *original* languages and then again in

English. You will find translations of the readings in an insert to your program. We invite you to take the translations with you, and return to them from time to time throughout the year. I invite the first group of students to the podium.