Thank you. Before I begin, let’s give Mr. Ely and all of the young award recipients a round of applause for their hard work. Now I am sure those of you here, did not get here without helping someone else or leading from within. For your dedication and persistence I think we should all thank you.

Can you imagine having lips, even a tongue, but not being able to speak? Can you imagine talking to the person to your left or right, only to realize that they were partially deaf toward your own voice? Can you imagine this is a daily occurrence in millions of lives? This honor was awarded to me on behalf of ASU but I would like to share with you that I have not just been given a title and a scholarship. Rather this honor stands a lot more dignified, as I have been given the humble opportunity to speak for those who cannot. As I share a message with you today, realize it is my voice but hundreds, maybe thousands, of hearts which are truly speaking, as I believe that is the true meaning of servant leadership.

I want to share with you, a lesson I have strived to share with many individuals throughout my life and those who have influenced me have shared with me, whether they knew it or not. I am here today to utter a thank you to those whom have served as guardians or models in my own life. Once I realized how influential these people have been, I soon realized I could influence many others just as they have.

It may seem different to think that a child, even seven years of age, that you set out to teach could actually end up teaching you. A teacher of joy, laughter and realization – once I had children teach me to relax and enjoy life as it spun, and then I could truly appreciate what I was giving them. To all of those children who have revealed to me unforgettable soothing, I would like to say thank you. Jack, Acea, Dorthey, Hannah, Olivia, Spencer, Maddy, Peighton, Dante, Tyler, Kaylena and Thomas, I would like to say thank you for revitalizing an old soul with your own success as swimmers.

A college professor may seem like all they want is for you to have no social life at all but in reality, I believe they serve as a vital part of life itself. Without their challenges, offered time or leadership ability, I would be standing alone here at ASU and would have never pushed myself as I have since day one. With the assistance from professors here at ASU I have realized I only know about ten percent of my true potential, as the other ninety is waiting for the taking. I would like to say thank you to every professor I have had the opportunity to not only meet or listen to but rather have been able to secure a part of them within me – to you all I say thank you. I especially would like to thank:

- Dr. Devin Jindrich for listening to my ideas and giving me a chance to try my own research
- Mrs. Jennifer Fay for showing me that a grade is a grade but knowledge gained can never be lost and that stands more important than anything else
- Dr. Gordon Shockley for encouraging lengthy ideas while supporting them 100% before even hearing the end of them
- Dr. Rhonda Phillips for showing me that experience, passion and imagination can truly change someone’s life and for opening my eyes to the vastness of literary research
- Dr. Lisenbee for listening, encouraging and waiting for myself to finally stand up and be myself here at ASU while opening my eyes to the simple complexities
• Mr. Damien Salamone for believing that I could and would make a positive impact on the lives of youth around the world and for offering endless and priceless expertise.

To you six professors, I cannot say thank you enough, as I feel you have helped to shape the person whom I will be leaving ASU as the most. And to every other professor which I have had the opportunity to be influenced by – Thank you.

Of course there are probably only three of you in this room whom know me the best and those three would be my family. Dawn Elizabeth Wilson and Christopher Gilbert Wilson and Christopher Lee Wilson: I would like to thank you for never letting me down, never doubting me and never encouraging me to even fathom giving up. Without you in my life, I would not be the complete person which I am today. Mom, I would like to thank you for teaching me that just because my pockets may be empty does not mean I have nothing to offer, as we all have endless amounts to tender. Dad, I would like to thank you for showing me how deep one’s heart truly is, as I have never met someone as selfless or openhanded as yourself.

Now to those whom I consider some of my best friends in my life today, I would like to say thank you. Stevie Fitch, Sam Mateii, Lizzy Jeffery, Ben Bridges, Tyler Delaney, Griffin Birchal, Kyle Novak and Charlie Joslin I feel I do not need to exactly say thank you, as I know you realize how vital a part of my life you have all been and will continue to be. Without the support of true friendship it would be easy to become lost.

Most importantly I would like to thank those whom have allowed me to influence and teach them in the past, as each one of you have shaped me in a different way. I would like to take a moment to thank, Hassan Abedi, a Tanzanian boy who inspired me to continue positively influencing lives, reminded me to never stop asking questions and motivated me to build trade schools globally for children.

Most people when posed the question, “what is support?” would be apt to think of something tangible. Usually people think that support needs different facets in order to truly be of use. However, what if I told you, that I believe support can stand with only one.

When thinking of support most of us think of the finished product – a corn stalk. Although, during growth periods there are various stages and the beginning of which the corn stalk actually has only one root in the ground. It is not until later in growth, years down the road, that the corn stalk has broad roots, lavish corn hushes and is considered, “complete”.

Some of you may think that a corneal of corn with only one root in the soil would fall and you are right, so is Newton. But what if we can physically and mentally change its center of gravity, could a single root hold the future of an entire corn stalk and be stable?

I pose these questions to you, because I believe that if a cornstalk cannot stand on one root, then it most certainly will not stand with a hundred. Please take a moment to think, what this single cornstalk root stands for you…
I believe the one root is yourself, and support is built around you. Although, without believing and supporting your own self completely then I believe you won’t be able to succeed. But if you can find your own center of gravity, your true self, then once you are offered further support you won’t just stand perplexed but you will tower above what you only dreamed was possible. If you believe in yourself, there is no limit to your mind, heart or aspirations. I believe in my family, everyone who has lend a hand to help me, everyone I have lent a hand to and all of you before me. The time is now, to look at yourself and not just think you can do it, but rather know you can do it. If something is done poorly in your book, then that only means you have plenty of room for improvement. With improvement comes experiences and with experience comes confidence and confidence brings vitality to your inner body which no one can see, steal or shake from you.

When you truly believe in yourself, your dreams and aspirations will not grow longitudinally but rather exponentially. I believe in you. I believe those whom depend on others, to define their true potential, will never realize it. Believe in yourself. Thank you.