

DEAN ENGLAND DAY SPEECH

Darcie Dodds Schott CGA '83

Thank you, Josephine.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Dean Lynn Rasch, Anne Kelley, and the CGA Council for inviting me to speak to you tonight. I would also like to thank **John and Pam Buxton, former CGA Dean Laura Weaser, Beth Schmiedlein, Emily Ryman, Seana Badalich** and **Stephanie Scopelitis** for their key roles in taking such great care of my own CGA student over the past three years.

I am humbled and honored to stand before you and represent all CGA alumni who have sat where you are sitting tonight.

When I was asked to speak at The Dean England Day ceremony, my answer was a quick "yes." Yes is my answer to anything that involves Culver, and I have had the privilege of serving Culver in a variety of ways since graduating.

But as proud as I am to be a graduate of CGA, it pales in comparison to the emotions I felt when I watched my own daughter begin her CGA journey—a journey that for *all of us* began in 1971, when the first Culver Academy for Girls co-eds arrived on campus.

Tonight we are here to remember and reflect on Dean England's role in establishing and leading Culver Girls Academy. Like so many of my CGA alumni friends...*and myself*, Dean England *loved* Culver.

- As a young faculty daughter, Dean England longed to be a bigger part of Culver even though it was still only CMA.
- After her father retired from the Academy as Band Director, her family relocated to Cleveland, Ohio.
- And soon after Dean England found herself overseas during World War II working in the service and married to a serviceman.
- But after the death of her husband, Dean England moved herself and her son back to Culver.
- I would like to think she had an inkling of what she was doing and she had a plan all along. (We're big on "having a plan" in our family.)

Once back at Culver, Mary Francis England went about forging a new path for herself by working at Culver's Summer School for Girls, and quickly becoming the Director—a great example of her strength and leadership *on call*.

I want to share with you a quote that has an unlikely source but I think speaks to why we are here tonight: “*Great moments are born out of great opportunity.*”

This is a quote by the hockey coach Herb Brooks in the movie *Miracle*...about the stunning upset by the 1980 U. S. Olympic Hockey Team when they beat the World Champion Soviets and went on to win the Gold Medal. This is one of my favorite movies partly because I am a huge hockey fan but more so because of the lessons it teaches. Lessons like —hard work, passion, and delayed gratification.

A little side note...One of the members of the 1980 Olympic team was Bobby Suter, older brother of Gary Suter, who played hockey for Culver under Coach Al Clark when I was here—Gary went on to play in the NHL and a few years ago was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame.

Now I’m not going to segue into a story about Dean England skating around the Henderson Ice Rink, but the analogy serves as an example of *change* being the result of a pattern of determination. And that was *Dean England*.

Her Hard Work, Passion & Patience allowed her the opportunity to create change.

Poised to lead a new direction for the brand of Culver...Dean England’s Culver Academy for Girls would serve as a vehicle of change and strength during challenging times for Culver Military Academy and Culver Summer School. Put another way, Dean England was an early advocate of *ONE Culver*.

It’s important to realize this was a time in history when women were still an inconsistent winner in the professional battles of the best American businesses. So Dean England took on no small task. She built an extension of Culver that would not *disrupt* CMA but would actually bring it into the modern era of education.

Take a minute to think about this...

You have an idea. You are passionate about your idea. You have reason to believe your idea is the way of the future. ...Lots of risk? ...Is it worth it?

Of course we’d all agree that it was worth it in Dean England’s case. And thanks to Dean England’s passion and drive, today’s CGA is setting new standards of leadership that are limited only by your dreams.

Dean England drew a blueprint for success within the Prefect system that CGA staff and student leaders have transformed into a daily expression of lead by example.

I am constantly impressed and inspired by the fearless approach today's CGA students take to speaking up when they see room for improvement and then coming up with a solution.

These are great life skills that will help make you a success professionally, but far more importantly, they will make you a *really good person*.

In order for you to more fully appreciate how far CGA has come, I will give you a glimpse of what life was like when I was at CGA. My years at Culver were what some would call Dean England's "heyday." By the time I arrived at Culver in 1979, it was almost 10 years after the first CGA girls stepped onto campus, yet it was not quite time for her to hand off the baton to her successor.

Then & Now

BACK THEN *we* had 1 Senior Prefect a year.

NOW *you* have: 3 rotations of Senior Prefect, this year starting with the kind, funny and competent Erin Luck.

We had 1 Pay phone per floor and the first computer classes taught by Mr. Weaser.

You have your own Cell Phone & your own laptop.

Butt rooms have been replaced by Recycling bins, and our red MacGregor Plaid pants are, thankfully long gone.

We were awkward as freshman & bonded as seniors on Beason. And all along we knew we were in the middle of something very special.

We also knew that Dean England had worked diligently to get CGA off the ground in the right manner, and although we knew the story, I will admit we didn't go around admiring her conviction. I wish we had done more of that. We occasionally got a laugh out of Dean England, but mostly she offered a calm smile and seemed very content watching us play out her vision.

When I was at Culver, I felt like I could do anything. Not that I didn't have failures—because any successful person will tell you that making mistakes is key to getting it right.

CGA affords you the safe haven to try new things—and whether you fall or fly, you are better for trying.

The confidence that CGA helped me build—it's about gaining a faith in yourself so that when the going gets tough the right decision will come to you. I've carried with me into critical meetings professionally, difficult projects in my community, and challenging times as a Parent... my confidence—no matter *what* the circumstance....comes from a place deep in my heart that is Culver.

Today, Dean England's vision for CGA continues to come to life in the Prefect System—providing roles for young women to step out of their comfort zone and discover their potential. Like:

- One CGA student who wouldn't take NO for an answer, rallied the community and raised over \$100K-first Culver Relay for Life.
- Or A CGA wrestler who competed at the State level and then went on to have Olympic aspirations because she was equipped with Culver's I-Can-Do-It Armor;
- And a complex weave of simple everyday events that will be the memories of tomorrow's Leaders who will recognize their time here as the foundation for knowing they could accomplish anything.

My hope and my challenge for *you* is that you allow your time at Culver to be your chance to be courageous. Trade in your ego for tolerance, and be open to the unexpected.

As I look out at all of you New Girls, I am at once.....

empathetic of the work you have ahead of you,

supportive of your individual passions....

and a little **envious** of the incredible journey you have just begun.

Sophomores—don't blink, because before you know it, you will be seniors.

Juniors—take a deep breath and know that there is happiness on the other side of this marathon year!

Seniors—graduating class of 2015, enjoy *every* minute of this special year. It is the *best* time of your life!

As a testament to Dean England's strength and legacy, I leave you with 3 truths:

- Anything in CGA you see ready for improvement, YOU are empowered to help change it. (okay except maybe short kilts)
- Each time you celebrate a CGA victory, remember that Dean England is at the core of it.
- And when you leave Culver, carry with you the tenacity of our Founding Dean...*No Matter Where You Roam!*