

Good morning specially invited guests, Principal, Mr. Roger Ali, Vice-Principal, Mr. Rodney Pardasie, teachers, parents, and fellow students. My name is Niall Hosein and it is an utmost privilege to have been given the opportunity to represent a group of extremely talented, diligent, and intelligent individuals that I was lucky enough to have known for the past eight years, the graduating class of 2021.

To my peers, do you all remember September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014? It was a day like no other which marked the start of something new – a period when we, a young group of boys, bonded closer together as we transitioned into what we are now: Naparima men. My address today seeks to recall significant steps within our journey, steps which are the embodiment of the phrase *A Posse Ad Esse – From Possibility to Actuality*.

Our path commenced with us, a group of young boys excited to begin this thing that is secondary school. The first five years passed like a blur, but one thing is certain, year after year we morphed into Naparima men: men willing to stand up for our beliefs; men who are not only intellectually gifted but socially responsible; men who are dependable, respectable, and trustworthy. It seems like it was only yesterday when we first put on our ties and walked onto Paradise Pastures. It seems like it was only yesterday when we first sat down as students in Naparima College and when we first sang our College Hymn. It seems like it was only yesterday when we first experienced the thrill of Naparima copping numerous scholarships and Naparima winning the triple crown. Yet, before we knew it, the first five years of this journey were complete and two years, along an even steeper road, were finally upon us.

But then- the unthinkable happened - the world was struck by COVID-19. Not only did this redefine social norms but it redefined the traditional method of education delivery. For us students, it redefined learning; face-to-face contact was no longer an option and we, desperately awaiting the social lessons and experiences of form six, had to adapt to a unique path, one which we navigated, together, steered by our innovative, teaching staff and administration at Naparima College.

And here we are now: no less successful than those who came before is. How can this be? Time and time again, I pondered upon this question... how is it that we missed the traditional foundational two years of face-to-face form 6 classes but are still able to carry on the Naparima legacy? It was only after deep introspection that I realized that during our time here at Naparima, we all had experiences which prepped us for the trials of sixth form during COVID-19.

Our success at form 6 can be attributed simply to four pivotal steps along our journey, each of which imparted traits that have led us to the success we all share today.

The first trait is the ability to make changes even if it's through unconventional methods. I remember when half of 1N did not do their literature homework (surprise, surprise). To everyone's actual surprise, however, Mr. Emmanuel Singh had told those who did not do the homework to remain seated in the classroom while those of us who did the homework were instructed to stand outside and peer through the fancy blocks as he taught. I can attest that 1N tried tirelessly to understand the psychology of that incident, but no conclusions were made. As I reflect now upon this incident, I have arrived at my own conclusion: this experience taught us to try new methods

in order to adapt. This lesson could not have come in handier than during the peak of form 6 when traditional study methods failed, and world felt like it was crashing in around us.

The second trait, my fellow graduates, was punctuality, seemingly trivial but in actuality, one of utmost importance. During a two-week period in form 2, I reached to school late on most days, a somewhat conscious decision at the time. Of all the classes that I could have been late for, it was ALWAYS Mr. Pardasie's physics class. This part was definitely not planned. Needless to say, I spent many classes standing outside observing the scenery. The view of the sea is in fact as spectacular as Mr. Pardasie claims. During these times, I did learn an important lesson – punctuality should be of utmost importance. The value of this lesson was realized during online classes in form 6 when self-control was needed to ensure that I got out of bed in time for those 8:30am classes.

The third trait is that of integrity. The expectation to always perform at our best has always brought with it immense pressure. I remember giving in to that pressure once by trying to cheat during a form 3 coursework exam. Guys, let me tell you that cheating and still failing the exam is not a good feeling, especially when it's coupled with guilt. While this was the first time that I cheated, that horrible feeling of guilt was so intense that I never again cheated at Naparima College and after this experience, I truly understood the value of integrity. Fast-forward to form six, cheating was no difficult task, but I ensured that the integrity that I maintained for the four years which followed stood strong.

The fourth trait was brotherhood. Year after year, I sat in this auditorium and heard the talks of being your brother's keeper, firstly with Dr. Dowlath and then with Mr. Ali. Consequently, by the time form 4 and 5 came around, I was well-aware of this aspect of the school's tradition. In fact, there was this one time that I lent a friend my homework fifteen minutes before a double period of add maths with Miss Gyan – after all that was being your brother's keeper. As faith would have it, however, the homework managed to disappear completely prior to the start of the class. It was a fun time standing through that double period. Afterall, the scenario of one's homework vanishing into thin air mere minutes before a class does seem a bit too farfetched. However, brotherhood extended past this. While there are countless memories of brotherhood during my time at Naparima, I remember vividly the start of form 4 and the advent of labs. I, together with three friends, did everything together – labs, helped each other with homework, questions, you name it. During this time, the four of us bonded closer and closer together. While one friend left to Canada after form 5, the group remained strong, fueled by our desire to see one another succeed – something which proved crucial to our successes. My fellow graduates, it was these friendships, these selfless portrayals of brotherhood, which made it easier for us during our final two years in the face of a global pandemic. We all can attest to this brotherhood at Naparima – in fact, it was this ideology which foreshadowed Naparima College winning seven (7) scholarships in 2021 alone. I know the bonds we have formed will forever remain unbreakable and will continue to guide as along our paths.

These four lessons are applicable to all of us even if we learnt them in different ways. In this regard, it clear that our time at Naparima has taught us many crucial lessons, and these lessons were often outside of the typical classroom environment. These lessons also proved most

substantial to us when combatting the initial struggles of online learning. Just as with all things, we Naparima men fought through it and made the best of it. We were able to embrace this new platform and utilize our lessons to make the best opportunities for ourselves and those around us. Even in the face of adversity, we Naparima men continued to thrive, a fact concomitant of the selfless dedication of the teachers and staff at this institution.

And so I would like to thank these great individuals for we are today: the teachers who always gave 101% to ensure that no student was ever left behind, even if it meant sacrificing their own time; the library staff who never said no when we needed to print that last minute project or during our form 1 and 2 days, when we needed to borrow the computer to do our homework; the ground staff who ensured that our classes were always up to mark and ready for learning the next day; and the office staff for handling the incredibly difficult logistics of running such an institution.

As our journey at Naparima comes to a close, I know that we will all miss the thrill of Naparima obliterating Presentation at the naps-pres games, the ole talks during free periods and the excitement of playing cards in the 6BS2 and 6BS3 classrooms. I know that we will miss being excited every day to wear that tie, a symbol of excellence and opportunity. I know that we will miss the opportunity to climb this hill every day to see this great institution – the institution that made us who we are. But now begins a new journey, that of the Naparima man.

This journey will entail success. It will be one of many fruits born out of the momentous occasions that we were so fortunate to be a part of; It will be a testament to the strong foundation and holistic education provided to us at this great institution; it will be a testament to the virtue of the lifelong

friendships formed within these walls; it will be one defined by the change, changes we believe in that will be conducive to the betterment of society. This journey, like that of our journey throughout Naparima College, will be guided by that mantra which is so dear to our hearts – A Posse Ad Esse – the principle upon which we Naparima men utilize the countless resources at our disposal to make best opportunities for ourselves and those around us.

I know that no matter how far we may roam, we will forever be proud of our alma mater: Naparima College.

Thank you for your time, memories and friendship.