



# Dear Seniors:

**A collection of letters, quotes, Bible verses and other notes dedicated to the Class of 2020 from your Wesleyan family**

***Compiled by the Kentucky Wesleyan College Alumni Association***

**Dear Class of 2020,**

**Congratulations on a crowning achievement! Your degree from Kentucky Wesleyan College opens doors for you in a multitude of areas, and along a varied set of pathways. You have been prepared to be the leaders of our next generation and you go forth with both confidence and hubris. Your task is to give back to society in ways that make everything and everyone around you better.**

**The COVID-19 virus has tested your courage and resolve in many ways. As a class, you were forced to adapt to wholesale changes in a manner not witnessed for generations. Your academic paradigm was upended. Events ranging from athletics to internships were cancelled; you were forced to remain separated from friends and family; and you now view the world through a lens that appears to have become much less friendly.**

**The world is constantly in flux, and it can often scare you in ways you have yet to understand. As this semester has shown, you have the ability to adapt quickly and well. You have the foresight to continue moving forward regardless of the barriers placed in your path. You have shown that you can overcome in tenuous times, growing stronger from the experience. You will need to remain actively engaged with the global society as much as possible. You have the opportunity to shape our world as you wish. You have the ability to be that positive force toward which others will gravitate, ensuring a world of which you will be proud to hand to your children!**

**Your liberal arts degree provided you the chance to develop strengths required in the coming decades. From open-ended semester-plus projects with no definite direction other than your guidance; to internships; to leadership roles across campus; to sharing ideas directly with your professors; you have learned to forge your own path. You have also learned to engage with those around you, and you have learned to never back down as you pursue your dreams!**

**I hope you will make plans to come back and walk across the stage on September 25, 2020 and finally celebrate your graduation with your Panther family in person.**

**We believe in you, we are proud of you, and we are excited to follow the wonderful path you will establish as a Panther alum! Go forward, graduates, and make your mark in this world! You have earned this opportunity!!**

**Sincerely,  
Dr. Tom Mitzel, President  
Kentucky Wesleyan College**



**Dear Seniors of 2020,**

**We are excited to welcome you as our newest class of Alumni. I certainly hope that being an Alumnus of Kentucky Wesleyan College means as much to you as it does to me. I will tell you that in my earlier years, I didn't think that it was that big of a deal. However, I was wrong. It was a big deal. It was a big deal for my dad, my grandmother, my sister and everyone who invested in me. Once I realized this, I found a greater sense of pride in my accomplishments. I hope that every one of you can find that sense of pride and passion much sooner than I did. As a young man, I didn't realize how much the Wesleyan community shaped my life. I didn't appreciate the developments that came to fruition from each chapter that was written at Wesleyan. Not only did Kentucky Wesleyan College make some of the greatest impacts on my life, it taught me values. I didn't realize that immediately. I hope that you are grateful for your education and your time at Kentucky Wesleyan College as it is a gift.**

**Here are few words of advice that I'd like to pass on that I hold in high regard:**

**First of all, never let anything or anyone come between you and your character. Your character says everything about who you are. People will know you by your character. Having character means to have courage and willingness to do the right thing all the time. People with character always do their best and never give up. They work hard for themselves, their family, their church, their community, their friends and more. There is a line in one of my favorite movies, "Remember the Titans", that I keep at the forefront of my mind... "Character reflects leadership." I hope that your experiences at Wesleyan have prepared you for leadership.**

**Secondly, I'd invite you to take a moment and reflect on what integrity means to you. To me, it's about honesty and doing what's right even when no one is looking. I know that sounds cliché, but that's the easiest way for me to share it. Your integrity can be one of your greatest attributes in life. It's also a trait that you can teach others, especially your children. Think about it, do you want to do business or be in a relationship with someone who holds integrity up high or someone that cuts corners, misleads and stretches the truth? I think that we know that answer.**

**Lastly, I would encourage each of you to figure out what your "BRAND" is. You may be asking what that means. Think about some of your favorite brands of clothing, restaurants, and businesses. Why are they your favorites? Now use that information to establish what your brand is. What words do you want associated with your name? What will people think of you when it comes to business, teaching, or community? If any of those words have a negative connotation, you may want to re-brand. Also, please keep in mind that all the hard work that you put into building your character, integrity and brand can be shattered in moments by poor choices in behavior, actions and words.**

**I want to wish you the best upon your graduation and congratulations on this great accomplishment, and, as you'll see from this album, I hope you'll realize that your Wesleyan memories are just beginning. Hold your heads up high, build your brand, and lead with character and integrity. You're a Kentucky Wesleyan Panther and that's something to be proud of. Wear your purple often and wear it with pride. Hopefully we will see you, the Class of 2020, at Homecoming in September. It is my honor to welcome you into the Kentucky Wesleyan College Alumni Association.**

**Keep living the Wesleyan Way!**

**Go Panthers!**

**Sam Taylor '97, President  
Kentucky Wesleyan College Alumni Association**



**Dear Seniors,**

**As your alumni director, it's been my job to collect these words of encouragement and compile them into this keepsake for you. I've sent texts and emails, posted on social media and used other modes of communication to ask alumni and friends for submissions, planning to write one myself all along. The truth is, this is harder than I expected it be. I've struggled to decide between a brutally honest, 'it is what it is,' approach and one that is full of optimism and focused on finding the good in any situation. Then I realized, what if the answer can somehow be both? So, here are a few words written by a self-proclaimed brutally honest optimist:**

**Since this pandemic started, I've found myself experiencing a roller coaster of emotions. Some days, I wake up determined to find the silver lining and try to encourage others to do the same. I'll get up and dressed, get a ton of work done, get a hard workout in and end my day with a healthy meal and a long walk with my dog. It was probably a day like this that I decided to pitch this 'Dear Seniors' project to our team. Other days, I wake up mad at the world. I miss my family, friends and coworkers and the familiarity of my routine, and the doom and gloom only worsens each time I have to remove plans I had for 2020 from my calendar. I usually end those days with a glass (or glasses) of wine and a Lunchable for dinner. As if that variety of emotions isn't broad enough, I wake up on other days feeling so guilty for all of this self-pity. Sure, my nieces are going to have grown a bit by the time I can hug them in person next and I'm probably going to have to wait until 2021 to see Tyler Childers in concert again, but so many people have it worse. People are missing out on memories that can't be repeated – memories like babies being born, loved ones being laid to rest and college seniors graduating. People – people like you – are dealing with circumstances like that and here I am feeling sorry for myself because I can't go to TJ Maxx. What kind of selfish person does that?**

**I give you that peek into my anxiety-ridden brain for one reason – I want you to know that however you are feeling during this time is justified. You have every right to be angry or sad or confused or scared and it's okay if those feelings change daily. None of us have asked for this to happen and none of us should feel the need to apologize for how it has made us feel, no matter how trivial our challenges seem compared to those of others. That being said, my "advice" in this letter is to urge you to truly process those feelings in a way that works for you. Feel your feelings, but don't let them become you. Let it hurt, and then let it go. We can emerge from this hardship stronger, more connected and full of gratitude if we set our minds to it.**

**In closing, I'll leave you with one of my favorite quotes about challenging times – "Going through things you never thought you'd go through will only take you places you never thought you'd get to." – Morgan Harper Nichols**

**I hope some of you have found my words helpful and I hope that through this book, you realize what being a part of the Wesleyan family truly means. We are proud of you and we are here for you. Welcome to the Wesleyan Alumni Association!**

**Warmly,  
Summer Crick '14  
Director of Alumni Relations**



Dear seniors,

Please know that you have been in our thoughts and prayers in this difficult time. I can't imagine how it feels to have to leave campus early during your senior year. My only advice would be to reach out to your closest friends from KWC and always be there for each other.

I graduated almost 40 years ago and I still keep in touch with a special group of friends. We hold reunions and pick right up where we left off. With social media, it is easier than ever to stay connected. Stay connected and try to make it back to celebrate together at KWC's homecoming weekend in the fall.

Someone reminded me of a quote from John Wesley tonight. I pray that you will let this guide your life.

**“Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.”**

Congratulations and best wishes as you prepare for the next stage of your life.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Mullikin '82

Class of 2020,

This time of uncertainty can leave us all feeling a bit unsettled. However, this time can also bring great opportunity! Jeremiah 29:11 tells us “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

I hope this verse brings you hope and comfort as it has to me so many times!

All my best,  
Lori (Parks) Byers '00

Seniors,

Welcome to the world of being an alumni! As the campus “I.T. Guy”, it has been a great pleasure getting to know the majority of you over the past four years. I look forward to continually seeing you on campus for all the alumni events during the year. I'm a little awkward giving any “life advice” because we all have different paths but I do know your time at KWC has given you tools to succeed in any route you go. That said, I'll leave you with a quote from my hero, John Prine.

**“It's a big old goofy world”**

Congratulations,  
Matt Hanks '13



**Dear Seniors,**

**First, congratulations on obtaining your degree from KWC. I hope this finds you and your loved ones in a state of good health, both physically and mentally. Your health is most important. Maslow's Hierarchy is a more apparent measurement of our societal success in these times than at other more stable times. Use them as building blocks daily. Prioritizing them in order is vital. I think of you and the College often and even more so now. KWC is a wonderful place with a special place in my heart. Many of the good things that have happened in my personal and professional life since I departed there 9 years ago are credited to the friendship, mentorship, and scholarship of that place. Life is a lot about timing and luck. As a quick reference example, on April 15, 2011, the price of oil was \$109.66. As of April 14, 2020, it was \$22.41. There were literally thousands of open jobs, more jobs than people, on my first day working in the oil and gas industry on May 1, 2011 here in western North Dakota. It's not like that today. Pure luck for me. Your graduating class and you individually may be facing a much different reality. It is no doing of your own. A sense of bewilderment should be natural. I hope the following is of use to you as you take the post KWC life head on.**

- 1. Find relevant inspiration from the strong people who came before us: One person I recently started learning more about was Helen Steiner Rice. She was born in 1900. Her father passed in the influenza epidemic of 1918. Her husband lost everything in the stock market crash of '29 shortly after their marriage and became depressed. His mental health overtook him in '32. Helen once said: "Adversity can distress us or bless us. The way we use adversity is strictly our own choice."**
- 2. Don't forget the most important things you've hopefully learned in your time on campus, and I'm not talking about surviving Chenna's finance courses for those of you who did. As I heard President Emeritus Darrell say once – "While you are on campus be as selfish as possible and when you are done, give it all back to the world." You can be a light in these dark times. Wesleyan values are everlasting and the Wesleyan Way is what our world needs.**
- 3. Do not stop learning. I get it, some of you may be 'over school' right now. However, access to education is at an all-time high and further education still holds value in this world.**
- 4. Embrace the detours: Cliché, I know, but if you looked at what my mother wrote on my high school senior yearbook you would read a quote from Hemingway that reads "It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." I am sure the spring of 2020 looks so much different than how you envisioned it. However, there is still a world of opportunity that awaits. You are equipped and we believe in you.**

**Go get 'em Panthers!**

**My best,  
Jay Ivey '11**



**Dear Panthers,**

**I write this message to you with a bit of a bittersweet spirit. While I am so sincerely excited to welcome you to the Panther Alumni family, I am also devastated that the completion of your hard work is being celebrated far differently than you ever anticipated. The first day on campus, we new Panthers walk through the Grove and see where seniors take their celebratory commencement walk. We dream about the day when the hours spent in the library and chemistry lab and the Ralph Center culminate in walking across that same Grove and we're handed our diplomas.**

**Unfortunately, the reality of life in isolation during a global pandemic uprooted those plans. I want you to know that your alumni family wants you to feel permission to mourn the loss of the celebration of your work—to feel the sense of disappointment that comes along with those special celebrations being cancelled. Your sense of loss, even in times of great loss for many, is valid and important, and we feel it with you.**

**But, and I think I speak for your entire alumni family when I say, one day we will have the opportunity to celebrate you! Maybe we won't see you walk in front of the columns in the Grove and receive that diploma, but we will see your unique and incredible contributions to a post-pandemic world—contributions we'll know were made possible by the deep and selfless sacrifices you're making right this moment.**

**I am proud of you. I am thankful for you. And know you're being hugged just a little more tightly (albeit virtually) by your Panther family.**

**With love,  
Chase Durrance '14**

**Dear seniors,**

**Congratulations on the end of your college career. It isn't fair the way your year has ended. Kentucky Wesleyan played such a huge part in the person I am today and I know it will do the same for you. I pray the days ahead of you are bright and full of joy and success.**

**Best of luck to you!  
Megan (Evans) Schulte '03**

**Class of 2020,**

**Congratulations on this amazing achievement! Graduating from college is the first true opening to adulthood and "real life." Always stay true to who you are! Remember that you don't have to have the answers, and it is always okay to ask for help! The best thing is that KWC will always be there to support you and help you achieve your goals! Welcome to the best alumni there is! The world is yours for the taking...don't ever settle!**

**"Do something today that your future self will thank you for!"**

**Sincerely,  
Courtney (Chinn) Calloway '12**



**Dear Seniors,**

**Hello! How are you doing? I hope more than anything that you are safe with your family members, probably bored out of your mind at home, but safe, during this crazy, crazy time. If you are not, or you've lost someone close to you, my heart reaches out with all the love it can muster.**

**So much of our lives are unknown. I think the some of the hardest lessons I've ever had to learn were the ones beyond my control. Pandemics, disease, loss, whether or not we get the job of our dreams right out of college, or picking up and moving our lives if we DO get the dream job and now have to say goodbye to loved ones, are just some of the things we face when we feel the winds of change without any ability to stop it.**

**However, somewhere along the way we discover so many things that ARE within our control. In fact, after I graduated I found there were more things in my control than I ever even wanted. The world is a big place, and it can feel incredibly overwhelming after a world where your schedule rotated completely around classes, sports, and extra-curricular activities you may or may not have cared for. You are no longer defined by you peers, your school, what fraternity or sorority you were or were not a part of, what grade you made in that Biology class you never wanted to take in the first place.... Your world as you've known it has suddenly and drastically changed.**

**Instead, you get to wake up every morning and decide how you're going to face each day. You may have found a job that you love and are rigorously studying and working for it. You may struggle through several jobs and are just trying to get by until you find something that really speaks to you. You might have people you love that you need to support financially. Or maybe you find the love of your life and get married. Maybe you continue to get your heart broken, or end a nasty relationship, but are making strides to meet new people or just work on yourself! No matter what the circumstances, YOU decide where to invest your time and energy in this precious life.**

**I know this pandemic came at the worst time. But I want to send this letter to let you know that you are NEVER alone. The friends and relationships you've made during this time will continue to influence and build your life if you continue to reach out and let them. You have the power and control to decide each day how you love, how you learn, how you surround yourself with people who either help you, hurt you, or teach you a lesson along the way.**

**You've been gifted an incredibly rare time to take a moment and pause. So many of us feel once we have graduated that we need to hit the ground running as soon as possible. Instead, you've been given this time to listen to your gut and surround yourselves with loved ones to guide you to the next steps, whatever YOU decide you want those to be.**

**I'm sorry this letter is so long... I'm sure you've probably got other things you want to do. But my point is: I hope whatever you do, you continue to go and do them with your whole heart, keep your loved ones close, and find the beautiful moments in each day as you continue to learn and grow.**

**With love and safe wishes,  
Ginny Weant '14**



**Dear Seniors,**

**I just want to start off by saying congratulations! I am positive none of you thought your senior year would end in such a dramatic fashion, however, you are still graduating from college all the same! I have been tasked with writing some inspiring words and sending notes of encouragement and I will try my best to provide some comfort during this “unprecedented time” (boy, has that term truly been overused).**

**I’m sure there are so many things left unsaid and undone for many of you, but do not let that stop you from growing, developing, creating, and exploring new things. This life has so many curveballs and, honestly, you are lucky to experience such a thing so early into your adulthood. You have been forced to adjust plans and adapt to an environment that many of us, myself included, never thought would happen; and by grace and perseverance you will make it to the other side and become successful beyond your dreams.**

**I encourage each of you to engage in civic interests – join an organization that you believe in – find a new hobby, **READ MORE** – just trust me on this – and most importantly, stay connected with your friends and family. The connections you make in college are for a lifetime, if, and only if, you nurture and cherish those friendships. We live in a time of technology that gives you ample opportunity to stay connected and I promise, those connections will keep you sane as you navigate this world.**

**To the Class of 2020, again, CONGRATULATIONS! This accomplishment is just the beginning of a lifetime of successes.**

**Warmest regards,  
Kathryn Dishion '15**

**KWC Seniors,**

**I want to congratulate each of you on your success at KWC! I wish you the very best as you go down whatever road you take next in life. Expect a few detours, but stay positive and enjoy the journey!**

**For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)**

**Sincerely,  
Tonya (Schroader) Johnson '95**

**Dear Seniors,**

**Congratulations! The time has finally come for your name to be called as a Kentucky Wesleyan College Graduate. Your four years spent on this campus have no doubt been filled with happiness, laughter, joy and love. I hope you know the Kentucky Wesleyan experience has only begun. The relationships and bonds you formed during your four years at KWC will truly last a lifetime. You will continue to build upon them creating even more happiness, laughter, joy, and love. Make sure to cherish these relationships. Congratulations again, thank you for all you have done and will do for this amazing place.**



**Sincerely,  
Chris Williams '11**

**KWC Class of 2020,**

**Some of you will recall this as “The Last Lecture” from REL 102, but I wanted to share it when your peers who have not heard of William Borden.**

**William Borden was heir to a family dairy fortune who, upon graduation from high school, was privileged to travel the world for a year. As he traveled the world, he sensed the call to serve as a missionary, but put that off to enter college, and graduated from both Harvard and Yale. After graduation, he prepared for the mission field, but never arrived. He sadly passed away at the age of 25. But what he is most remembered for are the three two-word phrases he had written in his Bible. I share them with you as an encouragement as you enter your post-graduation lives.**

- 1. No reserves – Those of you who have competed know the satisfaction of leaving it all on the floor, the court, the field. You give everything and then some. While the outcome is important, it is important to leave the arena of any competition knowing that you gave it your best. When you receive your diploma, it is my sincere hope that you accept it as a representation of your best. If you are able to do that, it is graduating with honors in my book. You have lived “all in.”**
- 2. No retreat – When explorers arrived at a new land, they often burned the ships that transported them there. Why? They were making it clear to everyone that there is no looking back, we are dedicated to making the present a reality and a future filled with glorious hope. While nothing can be done about the past, it is important that you are always looking for a way forward. Keep pressing onward, upward, and forward.**
- 3. No regrets – When you live all in and are pressing onward, upward, and forward, you are able to reflect with no regrets. You have made your mark. You have not lived in the past of “what might have been,” nor have you lived with minimal effort and debilitating introspection. To the extent that you live with no regrets, to that extent you have succeeded.**

**Your education here at KWC is all about providing a set of glasses through which you see the world and all that is around you. It is my sincere hope and prayer that the new glasses provided for you during your time here will provide a way in which you leave this place and live with no reserves, no retreat, and no regrets.**

**Dear Seniors,**

**Sincerely,  
Ron Sharp**

**First of all, congratulations! You have graduated from Kentucky Wesleyan College! That is no small achievement and, for it, you should be proud. I hope you took advantage of everything that Wesleyan had to offer you along the way. Know that all of us in the KWC alumni community are proud to welcome you.**

**As you would lean on your family and friends, don't hesitate to lean on your fellow alumni. We are here for you, whether it's for networking or just having someone new to talk to during this period of social isolation.**

**My best advice for you is to hold close to the people in your life that you love the most. Don't hesitate to lend a kind word or a helping hand. The final tenet of the Wesleyan Way is that we love one another. Keep that front of mind in your life and I would bet that most things will fall in place behind it.**



**Best of luck!  
Ben Kees '10**

**Dear Seniors,**

**You may not realize it, but for you four-year class members we started our Kentucky Wesleyan journey together in August 2016. That was the time I made the move from Florida to Kentucky and my family became members of the Panther family.**

**I remember that Move-In Day and orientation picnic. I remember it especially because I was stranded in the Martin Alumni Center while the storm raged outside, forcing the picnic into Jones Gym. It was not the traditional start to the KWC year and this culmination is also not ideal. That is life. Our approach as to how we adapt and overcome, and how we choose to face the challenges laid before us is what defines us.**

**You have achieved much in your time as students, and the next steps will be even more fulfilling as you keep us updated on your progress and success in the next phase of your career. For some, that might be continuing academic pursuit, others it may include an internship now turned job, and for others the next step unclear. In any case, it is okay and you should be proud of your completed degree. Show off your diploma with great pride because I can tell you first-hand that we have the privilege of meeting so many of your new peers in the Alumni Association whose degree has added value because of you and what you will do.**

**Enjoy these days of celebration. They are certainly different, but no less important and meaningful. Come home to campus often, stay connected, pay it forward and remember you have a family of almost 8,000 Panthers roaring you on for the rest of your life.**

**Congratulations and God Bless.  
Eddie Kenny  
Vice President of Advancement**

**Dear Seniors,**

**It was a senior year to remember- not always in a good way with COVID-19, but you all persevered and proved that you can indeed be flexible and resilient! Some words of wisdom that I have been important to me -- honesty and integrity are what will define you, as will how you treat others. Your word is important. Life will throw you some curves, but it is what you do in response to them that matters. I hope each of you will find your passion and will pursue it vigorously, no matter what comes your way in life. I also hope you will remember that the best laid plans sometimes get sidetracked for a while, but not necessarily lost. Be strong, compassionate, care for others, have faith, do good, and live the Wesleyan Way and you will not go wrong. Don't forget to make your bed each day as you will start each day having accomplished at least one task. Many blessings and best wishes as you go into your life.**

**My best,  
Dr. Paula Dehn  
VP of Academic Affairs & Dean of the College**





**Seniors,**

**First, let me congratulate each of you for successfully negotiating your stay at KWC. I am an old man who finally was able to do so in August 1960. I got my 50-year medallion in 2010, and it hangs framed in our hallway.**

**For me, my stay at Wesleyan involved two hitches interrupted by two years in the U.S. Army. I first started school at WKU in September of 1951, but at the end of the first semester I transferred to KWC and continued there until May of 1954. I volunteered for active duty through a reserve unit that I had joined in February of 1954. I was called to active duty on January 3, 1955, and got out on December 18, 1956. I then returned to KWC in September of 1957 and graduated in August of 1960.**

**Now, why tell that story?**

**Simply to let you know that in attending college, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE! Except for the GI Bill, I wouldn't have finished college because my family did not have the financing available to pay my way. I worked at least 30 hours of every week of every semester in order to finish my degree. That is part of the reason I am so proud of what I was able to accomplish.**

**I certainly hope none of you had to struggle as much as I did to get your education. I have told several people that I do not regret one drop of sweat or bloodshed that I suffered to do that. However, I was able to become an educator for the 30 years immediately following my graduation, and retired from the public school system of Kentucky in 1991. If you have any aspirations toward education, do not plan to get rich teaching school. YOU DEFINITELY WILL NOT! But I learned early on that some things are worth more than money. The love I shared with students during those 30 years has helped me stay young at the ripe old age of 86. Retirement is great, but old age will not creep up on you. IT GALLOPS! So, may God bless you as you enter your chosen profession, whatever it is!**

**God speed and always remember, you have only one chance in life. WHAT WILL YOU MAKE OF IT?**

**Sincerely,  
Bob Hancock '60**

**Congratulations, 2020 Graduates!**

**You can now take satisfaction in knowing your many years of study and growth have led you to this moment. Now's your chance to make an impact on the world in whatever way you choose. I'm rooting for all of you!**

**Sincerely,  
Tony Hardesty  
Administrative Assistant for Student Life**

**To my fellow alumni,**

**What a year it has been. It may not feel like it, but I believe your education at Wesleyan has prepared you for just this moment – the unexpected. With your degree complete, you likely have an idea of what you want to do or where you want to go. However, it is all too common that life happens and you must chart a new course. You're ready, not just for what comes next but for what comes after that as well. No one has completed his or her Wesleyan education entirely alone. While graduation makes you leave Wesleyan, Wesleyan never leaves you.**

**There are a couple of tips that I'd like to share with you that have served me well since I graduated from Wesleyan:**

- 1. Work hard. Your education and talent will take you to a certain point, but your commitment to work hard will carry you the rest of the way.**
- 2. Care for those around you. You've spent every day of your life working to make yourself better – take some time and effort to lift those up around you.**
- 3. Be 'sine qua non' – the essential ingredient. Be involved and invested in all you do – your family, your work and your community. Wake up each day planning to bring everything you have to offer, everyday. No days off!**

**I'm proud of this milestone in your life and am excited to celebrate (from a distance) all the good things around the corner in your life! See you again soon.**



**Sincerely,  
Matt Ruark '09  
VP of Admissions and Financial Aid**

**Dear Class of 2020,**

**Congratulations! You made it! The countless hours and tremendous effort you put into your time as a Panther has lead you to this moment where you may now call yourself a graduate of Kentucky Wesleyan College.**

**I know that your senior year ended in a way that no one could have envisioned. I know that the emotional loss still weighs heavily on many of you. I hope that in the days, weeks, months, and years to come you are able to look back and focus on the memories that you made, the relationships forged in shared experience, and the growth you experienced in your time here. While the ending wasn't ideal, there was still great value in the journey. I can't wait to see where your journey takes you next.**

**I'm proud of you all. The grit, determination, and grace that you have shown to get to this point is something that I will always remember and admire. Be proud of yourself too, and be proud to be a Panther!**

**God Bless and Go Panthers!  
Rob Mallory  
Director of Athletics**

**Dear Seniors,**

**Congratulations on completing this phase of your education and graduating from Kentucky Wesleyan College!**

**I began my education at KWC over 50 years ago now, graduating in '73. For a shy, introverted 18-yr-old, it was quite a big step for me. However, the four years I spent at Wesleyan were some of the best years of my life. I pledged Kappa Delta Sorority and later served as President. The confidence I gained at Wesleyan helped me throughout my teaching career, and few would call me shy or introverted now (though I really am)!**

**My best advice to you is to stay connected with Kentucky Wesleyan. With social media it will be so much easier for you, but keep in contact with your fellow graduates, the athletic teams, and any groups in which you participated. Some of my best friends today are those I made at KWC.**

**Best wishes to you as you embark on this new phase of your journey and congratulations on graduating from Kentucky Wesleyan College! Go Panthers!**

**Blessings,  
Kathy Sherman '73**

**Congratulations Class of 2020!**

**We all realize the end of your Kentucky Wesleyan experience didn't go as planned, but nonetheless you are truly a special group of graduates. Please know that if you ever need anything I'm only an email, phone call or text message away. You've all been a joy to work with during the past four years.**

**Godspeed!  
Scott Kramer '87  
VP of Executive Initiatives and Retention**

**Dear Seniors,**

**Congratulations and welcome to the Panther alumni family! Wesleyan has provided you with a strong foundation for success. Whether you plan to continue your education in graduate school or move into the workforce, follow your passion. You're entering the world at an uncertain time but you're ready. Work hard, have a positive attitude, be a leader. These things will make you stand out from the crowd. Don't be afraid to reach out to fellow alumni and leverage your connections to get advice and guidance. We're here for you.**

**Success in life is measured in friendships and the impact you make on others. Nurture the friendships you developed over the last four years, give back to your community, and spend time with those you love. It's time well spent.**

**I'm incredibly happy and excited for each of you as you enter the next chapter of your life.**

**Live your life with dignity and grace.**



**03.01.2020**  
**Sincerely,  
LaDonna Koebel '89**



**Dear Graduating Class of 2020,**

**Congratulations! Your hard work and devotion toward completing your degree has ultimately paid off. Being an alumna of Wesleyan, my heart goes out to you, your families and classmates. Each of you are surely suffering from personal hardships due to the abrupt ending of the semester. I'm writing this letter hoping to lift your spirits with words of encouragement. As graduates of KWC, we know Wesleyan is a college engrained with the Methodist faith. With that being said, I would like to leave you a few scriptures and also encouraging passages for the many emotions I'm sure you and those around you are experiencing.**

**When you're feeling a sense of hopelessness know that I, along with countless others are wishing this scripture for you, along with the wisdom of these words from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." – Romans 15:13 "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."**

**For the days you're uncertain and afraid of what is coming next, remember these words: "Each of us must confront our own fears, must come face to face with them. How we handle our fears will determine where we go with the rest of our lives. To experience adventure or to be limited by the fear of it." – Judy Blume "The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?" – Psalm 27:1**

**Lastly, I remember being a student who recently graduated, making tough decisions after college and applying for countless jobs. Know during this time, you could feel disheartened trying to find your way in the world. When dealing with those moments, never forget these quotes and scripture: "Remember the time you thought you couldn't possibly survive? You did, and you will survive again." "The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need tomorrow" – Robert Tew "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." – Joshua 1:9**

**I wish each of you many successes along the way, wherever your journey leads you. I hope this letter encourages you and serves as a hopeful reminder to stay positive, and never stop working towards your pursuit of happiness in this life.**

**Best wishes,  
Deidra Frazier '14**

**Dear Seniors,**

**Congratulations on your graduation! I'm sure when you started your time at KWC, you could have never imagined that this is how it would be ending. You were faced with an unprecedented situation this spring, and yet you persisted. You have showed that not even a global pandemic can stop you from accomplishing your dreams! You should be incredibly proud of your many accomplishments at KWC and your recent graduation. Know that your campus community of faculty, staff, and alumni are cheering you on and will keep supporting you even though your time on-campus is finished. I wish you the best of luck as you start the next chapter of your journey!**

**Sincerely,  
Dr. Rachel Pritchard  
Assistant Professor of Biology**

**Graduates,**

**You made it! From your rained out opening picnic to a virtual commencement, things haven't always gone as planned for the Class of 2020. However, you've all been able to pivot and adapt with grace and are stronger because of it. Earning your bachelor's degree from Wesleyan is such an achievement and I hope you've found ways to celebrate and mark the occasion.**

**A Wesleyan education has prepared you for a career, but, most importantly, it has prepared you for a life well-lived. At Wesleyan you have learned who you are, what you believe, how to work with people different than yourselves, how to communicate effectively, how to think, how to serve and how to love. The world needs Wesleyan graduates like you and I can't wait to see all that you accomplish moving forward.**

**I don't know that I qualify as someone who should give life advice, but I'm going to try anyways. I hope that you do these two things:**

- **Lead with love. 1 Corinthians 16:14 (and one of my tattoos) tells us to let all that we do be done in love. Approaching every person, every situation, and every decision from a perspective of love and care for others will never lead you wrong. When others think of you, let them think of the loving and kind way that you treated them.**
- **Always say thank you. No man or woman is an island and all of us must rely on the company and support of others to thrive. Thank the people that have helped you get where you are and never stop thanking those that love and encourage you through life's journey. Have an attitude of gratitude.**

**Your connection to this place does not end with graduation. You may be leaving Wesleyan, but Wesleyan will never leave you. We want to see you in September for Homecoming and the commencement ceremony. We also want to see you on campus for career panels, alumni events, games, and performances. Future Wesleyan students have so much to learn from you and your experiences, so don't be shy about giving back.**

**Please reach out and let us know how we can help you moving forward. I wish you nothing but love, light and laughter.**



**Best wishes,  
Becca McQueen-Ruark  
VP of Student Affairs**

**Dear Seniors,**

**To the Class of 2020, I know that right now is such a crazy time for you all. A large portion of you are getting ready to graduate and start your career and the rest are moving on to complete more schooling. I couldn't imagine the emotions that you all are going through right now but know that your family, friends, and fellow alums of KWC are thinking of you all! You have a full life ahead of you and so many more memories that you will make. Even if you are not able to walk across an actual stage for graduation know that you will still receive your diploma that commemorates the hard work and success you have accomplished as a student! Congratulations, Class of 2020, and welcome to the best alumni network around!**

**My best,  
Laure (Nance) Faulk '11**

**Dear Seniors,**

**Once upon a time I was paid to write, and so I figured I would sit down to write something positive to my fellow Panthers as you navigate your entry into the workforce during such a strange time in our history.**

**Every day for nearly one week now I have tried and failed to put the words together. Each time I sit down and try to put thoughts on a page I am distracted by some aspect of what has become the “new normal.” In a conversation last night, I was reminded of a note I sent out to our team at the New Era last month as the “new normal” was just getting underway. Instead of focusing on what we didn’t know, I asked the team to focus on what we do know.**

**We know that our team is full of smart, talented and hardworking people. We know that the work we do in our community is important, and we know that the community we serve needs us to be on top of our game now more than ever.**

**After wrapping up four – or maybe five, if you’re like me – years of college, this may be a hard pill to swallow but the diploma you are about to receive is not a certification that you know everything. (This is equally as applicable to this year’s graduating high school seniors.) You don’t know what you don’t know. And that’s okay.**

**There is a lot that I don’t know. I don’t know on what date this “new normal” might end and the world begin to resemble what it used to. I don’t know what my business model or any other will look like on the other side of this until we get there. I don’t yet know what new skills I am developing or what this experience might better position me for in the future.**

**But what I do know is that one day soon this, too, shall pass. And when it does, you’ll be ready for what comes next.**

**You see, what I know about this year’s senior class is this. You are smart, else you would not be graduating. You are talented, or you wouldn’t have come this far. You are hardworking, as nothing about the recent journey has been easy. You are resilient, because despite it all you are graduating. Here is what else I know. Your gifts and talents are not to be put on hold. Opportunity may look different today than it did a few short months ago, but the world needs you all the same. Your community needs you; your neighborhood needs you and your family needs you. Not only do we need you, but we depend on you to pave the way, so that the “new normal” can be far greater than the previous normal ever was.**

**You will shape the future. You are uniquely prepared to stand in the face of adversity and rise to occasion because obstacles have formed in your way and you have overcome them already. No virus, pandemic or executive order can take that away from you. It may have robbed you of your opportunity to walk across a stage, shake a hand, turn your tassel and throw your cap high into the sky. But it cannot and will not impede your ability to use your talents and make a difference.**

**Now, go change the world.**



**Sincerely,  
Brandon Cox '10**

**To the KWC Class of 2020,**

**This year marks my 10 year reunion and quite frankly, I still feel underqualified to give advice. Even so, I will share my thoughts.**

**First, I express my condolences and sorrow for such a strange ending to your journey. However, it does not detract from your accomplishments and it will never steal the memories of your time at Wesleyan. Although you may feel cheated from the time that was stolen from you by COVID-19, do not dwell on it. The pandemic will not define your time at Wesleyan and it will not define your future. It is part of your story that you will one day share with others; embrace it and know there will be future opportunities for you to continue making memories at KWC. I can assure you that my experiences as an alumni over the last decade have been just as pleasurable and memorable as my four years in college.**

**Second, your friendships that you cultivated at KWC will be friendships you carry throughout your life. While I have grown distant from some and I wish I were still close to them, I have witnessed our ability to come together for alumni events and still laugh and share about our new paths in life. Remain connected with those people that have inspired you, helped you, and provided you with positivity along your journey. This connection can occur as many times as you choose, even if it's just once a year for homecoming. Never underestimate the power of a KWC connection. Being KWC alumni means you're a part of a special group of people, it is a simple joy to find you will be able to share in this with a complete stranger that suddenly feels like a long lost friend.**

**Third, do not fear a new beginning. Reservations about starting again are normal; it can be scary and intimidating. However, as someone that has experienced several new beginnings over the last decade I can assure you there are lessons and blessings in each one. Pick up and move to that city where you know no one, take that job outside of your comfort zone, try a new church, show up to the audition, visit that friend you haven't seen in years - you have one life, but you are permitted as many new beginnings as you desire. I'm not sure that they get any easier, but gaining knowledge and understanding along the way helps with the transitions.**

**Congratulations, Class of 2020! You have succeeded in every sense of the word and you deserve every ounce of happiness you can find in this life. While plenty of people will provide you with advice, find the pieces that speak to your heart and soul, take what you need and leave the rest. Read the quotes and listen to the cliches, they exist for a reason. Be sure to pay it forward as you now get to share your thoughts with the world. Our alumni family looks forward to your contributions and triumphs!**

**May God bless and keep you.  
Emily King '10,**

**Dear Seniors ,**

**Congratulations on your graduation during this most challenging time. You will now be known as a KWC graduate and it will be assumed you are a Christian because of your KWC tie.**

**I want to encourage you to adopt Matthew 5:16 as your daily guide:**

**"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."**

**You are prepared and you will make us very proud!**



**Sincerely,  
Dr. Tom Meredith '63**

**Dear Seniors,**

**As I was your President for nearly all of your Wesleyan careers, I will always remember the Class of 2020 as one of “mine.” I want each of you to know just how proud I am of you and how excited am for you. Each of you brought something unique to Kentucky Wesleyan and have left a permanent mark on the college that made us even better.**

**Your final semester was one that will be talked about and remembered for decades to come because of the arrival of Covid-19 to the United States which caused our in person activities at the college to be canceled or suspended, and in person classes to be converted to an online format. I am so disappointed that it may have taken so much away from your conclusion as a Wesleyan student.**

**But, I want you to know that I admire the way that you have persevered. You have shown future Kentucky Wesleyan students what it means to be committed to a goal. You will always be held up as the model of working, studying, and living the “Wesleyan Way.” You refused to be deterred from your objectives and you have not just succeeded in graduation....you have flourished. What I believe you will take with you into the next phases of your lives is that you now have an advantage. There will be no obstacle with which you will be confronted that will prevent you from moving on toward goals and objectives. You will not be scared of any challenge. You are better equipped to lead others because you have learned just how strong you are. I salute you for what you have accomplished in these times.**

**What I want you to focus on most, however, is NOT the last semester. I want your main focus to be on the relationships, the friendships, the accomplishments, the laughs, the joys, the victories, the difficult days that others helped you through, and, of course, the Wesleyan Way of life that over your entire time at Kentucky Wesleyan has become in many ways the fabric of who you are and will be.**

**Thank you for allowing me to be part of your time and experiences at Kentucky Wesleyan College. I know I am better in every way because my life became connected with yours. Thank you and I wish you all the success possible.**

**Barton D. Darrell '84  
President Emeritus**



**We hope you plan to return to campus on Sept. 25 as we celebrate our Class of 2020 in a dual ceremony together with the Inauguration of President Thomas Mitzel during Homecoming. It will be an exciting and memorable time!**



*and it feels so good*

— HOMECOMING 2020 —

**September 25-27, 2020**

[KWC.EDU/HOMECOMING](http://KWC.EDU/HOMECOMING)

