Good morning! I am pleased and honored to have been asked to speak on behalf of the Grady graduating class of 2011. I can hardly believe we are even at this point! It seems like just last semester that I received the email accepting me into the Broadcast News program of Grady College and here we are at graduation. Time has gone by so quickly!

As I reflected on my time here while preparing for this speech, I realized that I have learned much more than just the basics of the business. I learned lessons from Grady College that will stick with me for the rest of my life. And so I have compiled a list of Life Lessons from Grady to share with you all.

The first life lesson I learned is the concept of 80/20. People retain 80 percent of what they see and 20 percent of what they hear. Translation: This means most of you in here are not paying me a bit of attention.

Life lesson number two is: Shades of Gray. This was an extremely important lesson that broadcast news majors learn during Mock Shows. The premise behind “shades of gray” is that right or wrong is often unclear. We quickly learned a complementary lesson I have dubbed “shades of red.” You knew how bad your mistake was depending on the shade of red on Professor Smith or Furnad’s face.

Lesson number three is the importance of Attribution. Make sure you give someone else credit for a questionable fact. That way if it is wrong, you can blame someone else. It really is a very useful skill, especially if you have siblings.

Lesson number four is Don’t Miss Slot. Deadlines are the bane of the existence of all communications majors. The greatest fear for everyone in Grady is missing a deadline. For those in broadcast news, missing slot, which is the time that stories are due to go on air, is likely to invoke many of the “shades of red” I spoke about earlier on Professor Castengera’s face.

On a more serious note, Grady has admirably prepared us all to enter the “real” world with competitive skills and experience.

The fifth, and most important, life lesson Grady has taught me is the Importance of Work Ethic. Heisman trophy winner Robert Griffin III said, “Great things only come with great effort.” In Grady College all the professors teach you that there is no shortcut for hard work. There is no substitute for hours editing in Final Cut Pro. There is no substitute for spending days
chasing a story. This is the most valuable lesson we will take with us because we do not expect success to be easy. We have been trained from the beginning to work, and work hard.

I think we all chose Grady College knowing that we would get the kind of excellent education that is sought in the professional world. That’s why we were all terrified that first day in our Grady classes. I remember walking out of my first class—Professor Hazinski’s—thinking, “What the heck did I get myself into?!”

And then a few semesters later I recall thinking the exact same thing once again. It was the first day of NewSource.

For broadcast majors the first day of NewSource is truly traumatizing. You’ve been terrorized by former student who say you will be in class from sunup to sundown; you’ve heard the infamous legends of professors throwing chairs when the show goes badly. But you really aren’t sure what to expect. And this feeling of uncertainty just gnaws at you.

One friend shared her experience of her first day of NewSource last winter. As many of you recall, there was a blizzard last January that not only shut down the state of Georgia, but also delayed the start of school. Well, all students entering NewSource get an introductory email about a week before school starts that lays out the expectations for the class. This email reads, in all caps, “YOU MUST BE IN CLASS” and “DO NOT BE LATE.” My friend told me she was so scared of missing the first day of class due to the predicted snowpocalypse that she drove back to Athens early in order to be here before it snowed. Of course, school was cancelled, but it’s better not to risk the wrath you incur when you miss class.

In all honesty, though, the teachers we have here in Grady are the best of the best. We have emerged from our two years in Grady as rather more enlightened individuals. We see the world in a whole new light; our glasses are a little less rose colored and our vision is a little sharper.

From my experience with the broadcast faculty, I would have to say they are saints, though they might giggle at that. They went from being the most revered and feared in the business to trying to teach a bunch of know-it-all students. And my friends in other Grady majors praise their professors just as highly. So I’d like to give all the students a chance to thank their professors, along with the awesome Grady staff, one more time for everything you’ve done for us.

I couldn’t stand up here today without acknowledging that I owe so much of my success to my wonderful family and friends, as so many of us do. They are always supportive of all of my endeavors. I want to especially thank my brother and sister, who keep me strong and have always kept me humble; my parents, who have loved me unconditionally and been understanding through many years of unpaid internships; and my wonderful boyfriend, who has always been there for me and daily encourages me to be a better person. I also want to thank my friends who have listened to my stressed-out rants about class and life.
We all have family and friends here who love us enough to sit through this speech and ceremony, so let’s take a moment to thank them.

Finally I want to thank the most important people here: all of you. Thank you for being a part of my life here in Grady. We all share an amazing college experience that we built together. And just think: no more all-nighters writing papers, editing projects or researching stories for Grady College!

Congratulations!

Grady has given you all the tools you need to succeed, and it’s time for us to take those skills and use them to make a difference in the world. We all have dreams and aspirations, and we are lucky enough to have the training and ability to achieve them. So let’s show our professors, our families and the world what we can do. To close with the immortal words of my roommate, you don’t get your (ahem) tush where you want it to be just by sitting on it. So get out there and achieve your dreams.

Thank you!