

I am Gareth Vaughan and it is my honor to be the Head of Park Tudor School and to welcome you to this, the Commencement Ceremony for the Park Tudor Class of 2019.

Some weeks before graduation I start looking for some type of inspiration that can form the basis of this speech. Poetry, quotations, inspirational anecdotes, I try to consider them all. Fortunately, the internet has greatly aided in widening the scope of the search, just as it has aided countless students and others as they search for information to write an essay or solve a problem at work or prepare a speech.

Turning to the internet I focused in on the famous Winston Churchill quote. "Success is not final; failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts". Joe Paterno, legendary Penn State football coach had used the quote, John Wooden, famous basketball coach at UCLA, known as the Wizard of Westwood, had used the quote. If it was good enough for them. surely it must be good enough for me.

But there was a problem, on three occasions in recent months I had turned on the TV and caught the last 15 minutes of Darkest Hour, the 2017 movie about Churchill and his leadership of Britain at that crucial moment in the Second World War where it seemed all was lost. Irritating though it was to always catch the last 15 minutes of the movie it did inspire me to buy and read **CHURCHILL Walking with Destiny** a new biography By Andrew Roberts that was published last fall. A reviewer in the Wall Street Journal described the book this way, Two reasons

to be grateful for this new life of Winston Churchill: first, it is unarguably the best single-volume biography of the man; second, as a result, no reasonable person will write a Churchill biography for years to come.

And I suddenly realized, I had no recollection of Andrew Roberts including this famous quote in his biography of Churchill. I pored through the book; I couldn't find it anywhere. So I returned to the internet and asked it a more interesting question, did Churchill ever say, Success is not Final.....and the answer was he had not.....in fact serious researchers, historians and social scientists had searched in vain for a person who could rightly be identified as the author of the words. It just seemed to have grown over time through hundreds of slight adjustments and retellings of what were probably a handful of old adages. One of the most complete versions dates from 1938, and Life Magazine.

“Men with the spirit of youth pioneered our America...men with vision and sturdy confidence. They found contentment in the thrill of action, knowing that **success was never final and failure never fatal. It was courage that counted.** Isn't opportunity in America today greater than it was in the days of our grateful forefathers? Good!”

Wow, that is quite inspiring but unfortunately it is the text of an advertisement for Budweiser beer.

So I nearly sent you off into the world with advice from a beer commercial..

On the other hand at least I didn't use , " A gentleman does not have a ham sandwich without mustard>" Which is actually real Churchill quote.

So the message to me, that I pass on to you, is trust painstakingly written and thoughtfully reviewed books, trust scholarship and research, don't judge the truth of a thing by the number of people that repeat it, don't cut corners, take time to find the truth, treat it with respect, particularly if you don't like it, and treat the internet with extreme caution, it is about as reliable as a magic 8 ball.

Thank you.