

Samantha Pfab

Scholarship Day Speech

So, we are approximately three and a half weeks into the school year and for the entirety of these three and a half weeks, I have been in a constant state of denial. Denial that I have begun my fourth and final year at this incredible school. Denial that in a few months I will have to say goodbye to this place that I have called home. Denial that time has somehow managed to fly by so quickly. You too may be having these same feelings as you are in the midst of a season of transition and anticipation just like me. Questioning what is next is both scary and exciting. My denial and refusal to believe such things stem from my deep love for this place. From the moment I first visited Wartburg in the fall of my junior year of high school, I have felt connected to this campus in a way that I often struggle to put words to.

During that visit, it's hard to describe what happened but something clicked, something felt right. I felt at home here. I could picture myself here. Perhaps it was because everyone was so friendly and held the doors for each other. Or perhaps it was because my tour guide was filled with energy and genuinely cared about hearing my story. Or perhaps it was because the leaves on the trees had begun to turn orange and were essentially yelling, "Go Knights!" at me. Whatever it was, I had a feeling in my heart that this was it. This was the place I would call home one day. From that moment on, I became the weird Wartburg-obsessed girl at my high school. I loved rocking orange and black, I commented on the Wartburg College Instagram posts, and I came back to campus as often as I possibly could. I continued my college search, visiting other schools and such, but nothing felt the same for me, nothing compared to Wartburg. Finally, when the time came to move in, I could not have been more excited. I was nervous of course, but I was more than ready to take on my role as a Knight, I simply could not wait to be a member of the

Wartburg family. Now, as I stand here three years later, I can absolutely, positively, most certainly say that Wartburg is the only place for me.

Wartburg has given me more than I could have ever asked for. Wartburg gave me the gift of an abundance of nights neglecting sleep to hang out with new friends that have grown to family. Wartburg gave me the gift of opening my eyes to the world around me by traveling to three different countries for three different May Term courses. Wartburg gave me the gift of walking through changing my major not one, not two, but three times! Wartburg gave me the gift of discovering who I am and where I feel called in life. Wartburg gave me the gift of a community that shows up for me each and every day.

When I debated if my major was actually the right one for me, Wartburg showed up; Dean Kittle was there to talk through where my head was at and point me in the direction of specific people that helped guide me to where I am today. When my understanding of God was evolving and my questions about the meaning of life were expanding, Wartburg showed up; the entire religion department sat with me in those questions, listened intently to my struggles, and asked me more questions to continue my growth of determining what I truly believe. And when my days felt long and gray, Wartburg showed up; Lindsey Leonard, the director of student engagement, provided me a space to cry, to vent, to just sit and find the sunshine that was certainly coming tomorrow. When my grandpa passed away during my first year here, Wartburg showed up; my admission's counselor Mallory was there with me when I found out and continued to walk with me through my grief and my community on campus as a whole stepped up to be there for me in various different ways. Each and every day I spend on this campus, Wartburg continues to show up. The list of ways they do so could honestly go on and on. This campus is amazing, yes. But through my time here, I have come to learn that it's the people here

that make it truly extraordinary. Wartburg has been there to cheer and celebrate with me in all the good times but even more importantly, Wartburg has been there with me to cry and to mourn in all the dark times too. And that is a gift that I can never thank this place enough for.

My time at Wartburg will soon come to an end. I cannot help but think to myself, how lucky that I have a place that is so hard to say goodbye to. Though I am certain that I will likely continue in my state of denial for the rest of my senior year, I could not feel more confident about the ways Wartburg has prepared me for my next steps out into the world. My second year here was also the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. While we were celebrating this anniversary on campus, I was introduced to a phrase used during the celebration that year in Germany which says, “Von der Wartburg in die Welt.” This means, “from Wartburg into the World.” After hearing this phrase, I immediately raced back to my dorm room to proudly write it up on my chalkboard, deeming it my new motto for my time at Wartburg. This special place has given me gifts of life-long friendships, never-ending memories, a place that will always be home, and the confidence to know that it is my time to take what I have learned at Wartburg and head out into the World. Von der Wartburg in die Welt. From Wartburg into the World. May you find a place that gives you these extraordinary gifts too.