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Parental promises

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Quad 136

Parental Promises

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Parental Promises

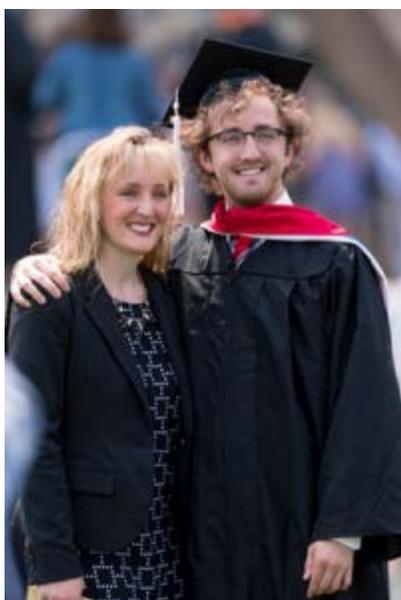


Photo: Tommy O'Laughlin '13

With graduation behind us and about 400 new Johnnies launched into the world, we are feeling pretty good in Collegeville. The weather gods gave us a spectacular **commencement day**—70 degrees and a light breeze. Our speakers, **Joe Cavanaugh '81** and **Paul Knaak '16** were both great. And, most importantly, our parents were happy. Fine weather and pleased parents: it is a hard combination to beat.

While we certainly want our graduates to feel good about Saint John's, and most do, parents' opinions matter very much to us. They play a significant role in footing the bill, and they are what our admission staff calls "influencers," those individuals who can sway young men and their parents to take a look at Saint John's when they begin their college search. So parents matter a lot.

Of course on commencement day, parents are very generous and appreciative. Numerous parents took the time after the ceremony to find me and thank me for what Saint John's did for their son. I reminded them that it was our great faculty and staff who did the hands-on work with their sons, but I was more than happy to be the representative of the institution they were thankful for. I asked them to send us their

sons' younger brothers and cousins (and their sisters to CSB).

I was reminded of these parents when I read the **Star Tribune article** entitled, "Goodbye, empty nest: Millennials staying longer with parents." Data included:

- Living with parents is now the most common arrangement for people ages 18 to 34, an analysis of census data by the Pew Research Center has found;
- The proportion of older millennials — those ages 25 to 34 — who are living at home has reached its highest point (19 percent) on record, Pew analysts said;
- Nearly one-third of all millennials live with their parents, slightly more than the proportion who live with a spouse or partner. It's the first time that living at home has outpaced living with a spouse for this age group since such record-keeping began in 1880.

Among young men:

- Declining employment and falling wages are another factor keeping many 18-to-34-year-olds unmarried, Fry said. The share of young men with jobs fell to 71 percent in 2014 from 84 percent in 1960 — the year when the proportion of young adults living outside the home peaked.
- Incomes have fallen, too: adjusted for inflation, wages plunged 34 percent for the typical young man from 2000 to 2014.

Young adults living at home is clearly not new, but Americans have tended to think of this as a European, maybe even specifically Italian problem, as stories like this one in the *NY Daily News* reported that, “52% of Italian men still live with their mothers.” Obviously these data suggest that for American millennials the economic challenges of leaving the nest are harder than in the past.



Photo: Tommy O'Laughlin '13

Whatever economic challenges facing this generation of young people, education is certainly part of the solution. At Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict we are doing what we can to help our graduates (and their parents) overcome these trends. We make two promises to our incoming students: one explicit and another implicit.

The explicit promise is “four and done.” If an incoming student meets their academic obligations and responsibilities, mom and dad can pencil in graduation for May four years hence. This is not typical of most colleges as the [Department of Education Scorecard](#) uses a six year graduation rate as the standard.

The implicit promise is that your CSB/SJU son or daughter won't be returning to their bedroom post-graduation—they will be employed (or at least gainfully situated). We are very proud of our placement rate: 99% of our graduates are employed, volunteering full-time or in graduate school within one year of graduation. And we are happy to share the data by [individual major](#) or even by [individual student](#).

By [Michael Hemesath](#) | May 26th, 2016 | Categories: [Alumni](#), [Higher Education](#) | [0 Comments](#)

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Hemesath



Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).