



City of Independence, Ohio

"THE HEART OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY"

6800 BRECKSVILLE ROAD

INDEPENDENCE, OHIO 44131

(216) 524-4131

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Members of Council

From: Finance Director Vernon Blaze

Date: Friday, June 17, 2022

Re: Finance Office and Related Topic Updates

This Week's Memorandum won't be so much on specific Finance Office topics as it will be on some general observations, takeaways and learned words of wisdom.

Independence High School 97th Annual Commencement Exercise Ceremony

As an IHS graduate, there's something about coming back to annual Commencement Ceremonies that is special and helps one retain that connection to past, present and future generations of fellow Independence graduates.

This year's 97th edition of those Commencement Exercises featured three excellent student speakers as well as 1972 Alum Peter Kirsanow as the Guest Speaker.

Sarah Elias spoke on Kindness. The world can use more of it, and it doesn't cost anything to give.

Alexandra Adams spoke on Purpose - Finding it and using it as a guiding light through life.

Emmett Stralka's message was on enjoying the journey of life, not laboring a lifetime and then enjoying the meaningful parts of life only after a certain age is reached or a certain financial goal is met.

Widely accomplished (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Kirsanow) 1972 Alum Peter Kirsanow's address was outstanding!

Speaking on God, family and country got some people's attention June 5! While acknowledging that no country is perfect but stating that the United States of America, faults and all, is still the greatest country on the planet, is a message that needs to be heard more and supported more in this country. Thank you so much, Pete, for bringing this message to Independence!



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A few final words of wisdom that were spoken that day are also worth mentioning. Apologies are provided upfront for not recalling exactly who said what.

- *"We're fortunate to grow up in a community with more opportunities than obstacles."*
- *"Self comes last."*
- *"Don't die with the music still inside you."*

Learned Words of Wisdom

The June/July Special Edition of *Forbes Magazine* has a number of interesting statements in it that can be applied to and result in better public sector governance too.

On Conservative Financial Management – Aviator Nation

Blessed with massive positive cash flow and no debt...

On Continuous Learning – Paige Mycoskie of Aviator Nation

"I've had 15 years to figure it out, and I've kind of learned slowly how to do it right."

On Not Getting Complacent – John Collison of Stripe

"Businesses that don't have to sing for their supper every day, I think they get a little bit flabby and lazy."

On Always Having More To Be Accomplished – John Collision of Stripe

"We still have a list four times longer of the things we would like to do."

On Not Being Complacent and Being Humble – Patrick Collision of Stripe

"I get a little uncomfortable when people are...too positive on Stripe. There's a lot we haven't figured out yet."

On Holding Productive Meetings – At Stripe

Meetings start in silence as attendees read a prepared note and add written questions for debate.



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Learned Words of Wisdom – Continued

On Why Being The Best Or Having The Best Is Not Enough – Palmer Luckey of Anduril

Explaining why Anduril has 39 lobbyists working for it and why he spends a lot of time in Washington DC:

- *“People want to believe that if you build the best thing, then you’ll win. That’s not the way that the real world works.”*