Welcome honored guests, and thank you for coming. My name is Braeden Alverson, and I am proud to represent the School of Dental Medicine class of 2020. My first college experience was seminary where the old-adage is “tell someone what you’re going to tell them, then tell them, then tell them what you just told them”. So let me begin by expressing a sincere and heart-felt THANK YOU.

We are all here today to celebrate the lives of precious people. These honored are mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, siblings, grandparents, friends and more. They are more than just a precious memory, they are part of your life story. And because of your selfless and generous gift they have become a part of all of ours.

I used to arrive very early every morning for class, before anyone else. I would walk in before it was light outside. I remember the first time I did it I reflexively said: “Good morning everyone” to the room. And as I watched the sunlight begin to illuminate our beautiful rocky mountain backdrop, I spoke to them of the beauty of the day, and how I was thankful for them being there with us. It became my morning ritual, and I will never forget that quiet time spent in the company of your dear ones. That may sound silly to some, but to speak personally, I lost my mother last year. I remember every moment. And though she is gone from this earthly plane, I still talk to her sometimes as well. I remember leaving her at the hospital after she had passed, and my only thought was for her well-being and care. I just wanted you all to know that you trusted us with your loved ones, and we honored that trust every day.

We all want to be healers. When someone comes to us in pain or seeking answers we want to be able to provide for them a listening ear, a compassionate heart and a healing hand. Without the gifts you all have given it would be impossible to really know the human body and how to treat people as they truly need. Your loved ones have provided for us the most selfless gift that anyone could give, the gift of themselves. It is our sincere desire that we use that gift to be the best caregivers we can be, and that we never forget what is the most important and singular focus of all medicine, the patient.
Life passes by in heartbeats and moments. When we reach our end the only real thing we have to leave behind is the way in which we loved and gave to those around us. We entrust it to our children and grandchildren, we leave it in the smiles of our friends, we place firmly it in the dear memories of our spouses whose hands are forever marked by a lifetime of holding. Most people touch the lives of their family, friends, church or work. Some touch the lives of their whole community, but it is a very rare and precious few who touch the lives of complete strangers. The Reverend Henry Melvill once said: “We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results.”

I do not exaggerate in the least when I say that Anatomy was life-changing. We each learned many lessons, and took away deeper knowledge than what could ever be written down on paper. It is because of those whom we honor today, and because of all of you, that we were able to learn those lessons, and gain that wisdom. So to all of you gathered, we say thank you. And to all of those who so selflessly gave on our behalf we say thank you, we honor you, and we will never forget you.

Thank you