



October 2023

It was less than a week before the 2023 Liberty Senior Thesis presentation when I bumped into 2023 graduate Griffin Beale. I asked him how he was feeling about his thesis presentation, and Griffin turned to me and said, "Mrs. Markell, I was nervous about my senior thesis in 9th grade, maybe even 10th grade, but now it's just 4 days away, and I am so prepared that I can honestly say I am not nervous at all."

The Liberty Senior Thesis is no small task; it is the culmination of a Liberty Education. It takes the logic, rhetoric and research skills that have been groomed through a very deliberate and cyclical Classical education process and puts them into action. In their last year at Liberty, students write a 20 page paper on a controversial moral topic, then condense it into a 10 minute speech and present it publicly before a panel of judges composed of lawyers and college professors. Then, at just 17 and 18 years of age, these Liberty students engage in a 10 minute defense of their position, interacting with the judges in a respectful and sometimes even humorous defense.

Each student, whether they were born for the stage or must will themselves onto it, completes the presentation with their head held high and a palpable sense of accomplishment and confidence. This humble confidence is a hallmark of a Liberty Student.

The senior thesis, upper school debates and speech meet put the soft skills garnered at Liberty on full display, but Liberty students also perform very well on annual standardized tests and college entrance exams. In addition to historically scoring in the top 15% on the ACT and SAT, in 2021 Liberty Juniors began taking the Classic Learning Test. The CLT is an aptitude test that was introduced in 2015 and is on the rise as a more substantive alternative to the ACT and SAT. **In that very first year, Liberty students scored 4th in the nation on the CLT, what an incredible endorsement of the Liberty program!**

This fall, Griffin Beale is a Freshman at Baylor University and he enjoys the distinct blessing of taking his K-12 Liberty education to Texas with him. In just his first few months at Baylor, Griffin has noticed that his comfort level with difficult texts including Scripture far surpasses that of his peers. He was also selected from a large pool of applicants for a campus leadership organization after completing an extensive written application and interview process, something that he remarked, "...came much easier to me than most of the other students, given my Liberty experience."

What would this country look like if more children were afforded a quality, K-12 education...It all starts HERE.

Right now, Liberty is planning to expand its physical footprint in an effort to accommodate enrollment growth, but also in an effort to bring our facilities closer to the high standard of our educational experience. A public capital campaign will launch early in the new year, and we look forward to announcing details! In the midst of all the future planning, however, we know that the important work done at Liberty every day is not about bricks and mortar, but rather is about building hearts and minds that can courageously venture out into the world, just like Griffin. Parents of Liberty graduates enjoy the peace that comes from knowing they provided their child with the best chance possible to go out into today's culture and stand up for what they know is right, and *that* is a cause worth supporting! Your financial gift to the Liberty Fund is imperative to perpetuating the Liberty story and that of so many up-and-coming Liberty Lions.

With Gratitude,

Lauren Markell
Mother of Three Liberty Lions and Director of Development