

**Senior Last Lecture  
Miami University  
Student Perspective  
Jenny Iovino (Miami '04)**

*"To think that in such a place, I led such a life."* As Dr. Shriver just reflected, those words are a part of Miami tradition. I walk past those words of Winston Churchill's every day as I pass the statue next to the Hub on which they are inscribed. However, I never would have thought that I would hear those words on the first day of my college career and be living them fully on the last.

It was a hot and humid July day in Oxford, Ohio, and I sat apprehensively with 15 of the newest members of the class of 2004. The sky was blue, the birds were chirping, and the mist from the reflecting pool fountain was drifting towards me... yet I was sweating profusely. I don't know if it was the fact that it was 95° out or because I was sitting next to my newest peers, wondering if they would like me... and mad that thanks to the humidity, for the next four years my student ID would be all hair.

Amidst scheduling for classes, I ended up not writing down the IM names of people who became my first Miami friends. I did take the opportunity to sit down and talk with my friendly and outgoing orientation leader. His name meant nothing to me at the time, for I did not know he was my newly-elected student body president. However, his clear passion for Miami and the words he shared with me have stayed with me ever since. On that hot July day, Jeff Griffiths told me of that quote near the Hub. He told me that it was the beginning of my college career, and that he was so excited for what it would bring me. He warned me, too, however... that it was going to go fast. But that warning came with assurance—that I would get out of it exactly what I put into it, and that if I gave of myself to Mother Miami, she would surely give back to me.

Four years passed—in the blink of an eye. Over those years, I have walked among red brick buildings as the crisp autumn leaves fell and the marching band practiced for the upcoming football game. I rubbed the heads of the turtles, even if they are not the cleanest, and I walked around the perfect circle of snow that sat atop that seal upon which no Miami student wishes to tread. I pulled my first all-nighter—and probably not my last—and learned that I may not remember everything I've been tested on, but I will never forget 2 a.m. conversations in the hallways of MacCracken.

I've been at the library when it closed and slept on the couch in the office of your Associated Student Government. I've met professors who challenged me and administrators who believed in me. I have battle scars from broomball and 180 women I call my sisters. I've said goodbye to the Buzz and those burritos as big as your head, and become an all-too supportive patron of Starbucks and Qdoba. I've received an email from Dr. Garland "canceling" class that Thursday before spring break.

I've gone to the Rec just to eat calzones and seen free midnight movies at the Princess. I've sat through four-hour Student Senate meetings to make this university better and tried (but failed) to see the alleged motorcycle ghost.

I have given money to parking services.

I have planned banquets to honor professors and attended lectures by some of the most prominent leaders of our nation. I have found myself studying, as a second-semester senior, harder than ever for a class that's not in my major... just because I love it. I've waited to do laundry until I ran out of underwear. I've met my best friends in the world and found my calling in life.

Over the past four years, I have lived my college career to the fullest, with the experiences both in- and outside of the classroom shaping me into the person I am today. But what have I learned? How have I changed from that hot July day?

I have learned that high school is practice for college, and college is practice for life. I've learned that leading with integrity is hard, but it's the only option. I've learned that there will always be someone to compare yourself to, but they, in actuality, might be looking up to you. I've learned what it feels like to win and what it feels like to lose. I've learned that turning on your flashers does not keep you from getting a ticket, and that if you make a sign, Bagel and Deli will hang it up. I've learned that standing up for something you believe in may mean you're the only one standing, and I've learned that with courage, patience, and the support of those around you, anyone can follow their dreams. I've learned that first impressions can be lasting and that Miami pride is contagious. ...And I've learned that saying goodbye is inevitable, but it sure is hard.

But now, after the four best years of my life, I have to say goodbye... to my friends, to my professors, to the administration, to my little sister... I have to say goodbye to *our* Miami University. As I drive out of Oxford, Ohio, for the last time, with tears inevitably streaming down my face, I will not be crying tears of sadness because I am leaving my home. Rather, I will be crying tears of joy that in such a place, I led such a life.