

## Dedicated to Truth and Virtue

Ridgeview's unabridged Latin credo is *neque popularitati neque utilitati at veritati virtutique dedicatum*. Translated into English, this means, "Dedicated not to popularity or utility, but to truth and virtue." Herein, 'dedicated' does not have a commemorative sense. Instead, it expresses what individuals working and studying at Ridgeview are dedicating their lives to. These lives are not dedicated to what is popular, because what is popular is so rarely good. Neither is what is popular typically permanent; evanescence is almost a requisite condition of popularity, and Ridgeview is a celebration of permanent things. Moreover, an education chosen purely for practical or utilitarian ends, lacks the epistemological humility to be the one best suited to arranging human affairs, securing liberty, answering the accursed questions, or allowing individuals to develop their quiddities and explore the fullness of their potential. By contrast, we acknowledge that we are at work with those for whom this time may be the last time wherein every choice need not be determined according to strict economic calculations. This education, because it is holistic, must consider the totality of the person and not merely his role as a student. This pedagogy concerns not only how information is communicated, but in ascertaining what manner of living is best. It is an education that inculcates in people an interest in truth, and as such, acculturates them in a disposition anathema to apathy and relativism. It aims to produce people accountable to virtue who reject the solipsistic supposition that such ideas originate within them solely as a result of their own genius. Ridgeview is, as much by its rejection of popularity and utility as by its embrace of truth and virtue, committed to remaining a haven for those genuine individuals who want an education corresponding to their condition as such.

Ridgeview is an inadvertently countercultural institution. It is not idiosyncratic or eccentric for the sake of appearing different, but because we adhere to traditions and believe that education ought to convey a comprehension of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, Ridgeview appears out of step with society at large. While greater educational choice has resulted in an explosion of gimmicky curricula, Ridgeview has as the author of its curriculum the steady erosive power of time. What remains true or worthy of our contemplation after centuries, remains worth teaching. We persist in a belief that given a properly developed historical imagination, history can teach powerful lessons. We believe that there are forms of authority external to ourselves, and that it is foolish as well as dangerous to disparage religious conviction. We believe that virtues trump values, that there is a comprehensible order in the world, and that reason gets us a long way, but not all the way. We believe that we are obliged to treat one another as ends and not as means, and that our thoughtful and humane participation in the present determines our future.

This form of education is possible only by the combined and coordinated efforts of parents, teachers, and students. At base, the parent's role in this is to behave paternally and support the style and manner of instruction they have chosen for their child. The teacher is expected to dress, speak, and conduct himself in a manner that shows that being here is a calling and not simply a vocation. The student must bring good character, curiosity, initiative, and work ethic. Each of these constituencies must have conversation as a common interest. Each must want Ridgeview to become the public

square, a place of both study and deliberation, that exists for everyone's edification. Each must be committed and contribute unabashedly to the greater public good. It is not enough for the administration or the faculty to endorse these goals – the community must live by them. We must all reject utilitarianism as an unsuitable end of education since despite our best laid plans, we cannot know what we will be. We may be a son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, father, mother, but these are circumstantial roles. Whether we are the best version of ourselves in any of these roles is determined by how we commingle knowledge with experience, and the manner in which we cultivate our life with some measure of wisdom. Wisdom is about how we will live, and how we will live is a more pressing concern than the comparatively narrow concern of how we will make our money. While money is necessary, and capable of great good, we must be prepared to live a good life whether riches come to us or not. We must develop the capacity to balance overlapping areas of our lives within the finite framework time and mortality impose. The intellectual, social, physical, spiritual, and mental aspects must all be fed, and what we feed these different dimensions of our lives informs our capacity for fulfillment, contentment, and Eudaimonia.

The cultivation of this community depends upon our not recklessly pursuing an ever-larger enrollment. There is a size beyond which we cannot do what we do. Our goals require a measure of intimacy. Instead of pursuing greater numbers, we pursue greater purpose. Those whom we are most desirous of, are those who understand clearest and are most grateful of what we offer. People who can be mindful, conscientious, appreciative, deliberative, considerate, respectful. These qualities are the precursors of wisdom, and the necessities of paternalism. That we insist on these, and eschew shallowness, pettiness, self-entitlement, apathy, pretentiousness, and ingratitude focuses us on our commitment to the development of both intellect and character, but always of character before intellect.

In this endeavor, we are ever conscious of posterity. Institutionally speaking, we do not live for today. The seeds we plant in education take time to yield the desired fruit, and we know that those with whom we work are not yet who they will finally be. Such a recognition calls for compassion and leniency, as well as the humility to acknowledge that there is much about our endeavor that is unknowable. Nevertheless, Ridgeview must have as its primary constituency people interested in leading a life of the mind. Those adults who are held up as models must live lives worthy of emulation. Each of us must have a regard for his surroundings. Where we study and what we write on our walls informs the culture we immerse ourselves in. The art we look at, the music we listen to, the books we read, the people we befriend – all of this is our education, and no part of it is insignificant. It is because of this that a vigilant regard for truth and virtue is at all times and in all things pertinent, and it is for this reason, that Ridgeview chooses these to which to dedicate all of its considerable efforts.

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