

The College of New Jersey
Phi Beta Kappa Induction Ceremony
Remarks of Kenny '07 and Keith '07 Lucas
As prepared for delivery
April 27, 2022

KENNY: First and foremost, we'd like to welcome esteemed guests and key holders.

KEITH: Moreover, we'd like to thank the Delta Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and the committee for voting us in as alumni members.

KENNY: It's such a privilege to be inducted into the nation's oldest and most prestigious honors society.

KEITH: We'd also like to congratulate every new member who's being inducted tonight.

KENNY: This is a phenomenal accomplishment and you should all feel incredibly proud.

KEITH: In fact, you were able to make it in as undergraduates which is a testament to your intellectual curiosity and your academic abilities.

KENNY: Unfortunately, our academic abilities during undergrad were not sufficient to get in.

KEITH: Some may say they were insufficient. I mean, we did OK.

KENNY: But not good enough for PBK. And we really wanted to get in.

KEITH: Immediately after college, we knew what needed to do to finally accomplish our goal of becoming members of PBK:

KENNY: We just needed to create a historic Oscar-winning film about Chairman Fred Hampton that President Obama loved. He really did. Check his Instagram. Or, Twitter if you still have it after the takeover.

KEITH: Needless to say, we accomplished our goal and it all really started at the College Of New Jersey.

KENNY: We arrived at TCNJ in 2003 when Tobey Maguire was the only Spider-man we knew and loved.

KEITH: It was a strange year. President Bush has just waged a reckless war on Iraq.

KENNY: However, we were concerned with another, more personal, war: the war on drugs.

KEITH: Our family had been decimated by this war especially the men including our father who was arrested at its height. Not wanting to be victims of it, we decided college was our only way

out. Either that, or professional wrestling. And we simply didn't have the bodies or charisma for a flourishing career in sports entertainment.

KENNY: TCNJ was the first and only college we visited. And the first and only college we got into.

KEITH: But, we fell in love immediately.

KENNY: Our relationship with TCNJ started in earnest during the summer as we were EOF students.

KEITH: On our first day on campus, our minds were blown. We were studying with students from all over the world.

KENNY: We were being challenged in ways that we'd never been challenged before.

KEITH: We were being asked questions that forced us to think differently about society.

KENNY: It was all very invigorating. And frustrating. We must have discussed dropping out at least fifteen times but we persevered.

KEITH: When we got to campus that fall, we got the reward of being able to live in T-W which is one step above the housing project we stayed at in Newark.

KENNY: Actually, our rooms were better in the projects.

KEITH: That was a different time. We're sure things are better now.

KENNY: College was a challenge. We didn't know what we wanted to study. We didn't know who we wanted to be.

KEITH: We came in as political science majors. And we quickly realized that we hate political science. Not sure if it's the science part or if it's the political part.

KENNY: Or, maybe some combination of both. But it was not for us. So, we had to think long and hard about what major suited our academic interests.

KEITH: Then, it hit us like a slap from Will Smith. We knew what we needed to do.

KENNY: We were doing a book drive in our capacity as senators for the student government.

KEITH: Wasn't sure if we were supposed to take books or give out books. Either way, like most senators in this country, we weren't doing our jobs.

KENNY: Instead, we were reading the books. And we stumbled across Plato's *Five Dialogues*. And it was that book that changed our lives.

KEITH: We were introduced to Socrates for the first time. The dude was a G. That's short for gangster. Not Greek. He was a funny guy. But he was also very inquisitive.

KENNY: We fell in love with his intellectual curiosity, his rigorous questioning of societal norms, and his punchlines. Plato's punchlines.

KEITH: He made us laugh. He made us think. He made us quit the student government, drop political science as a major, and commit our lives to philosophy.

KENNY: We also broke up with our girlfriends.

KEITH: We had separate girlfriends.

KENNY: And he made us question taxes. Why do twins pay taxes?

KEITH: We don't get double the services. Plus, there are no twin congresspeople. Or twin senators. Or twin Presidents.

KENNY: That's twice the taxation without representation. Wars have been fought for less. But we digress.

KEITH: As philosophy majors, we learned about a diverse array of thinkers. Thinkers such as Plato. Descartes. Wittgenstein. Kant. Spinoza. Locke. Hume. Hegel.

KENNY: A lot of dead white guys. But we loved it. In addition, we learned about the philosophy behind film.

KEITH: We took a course where we dissected films using major philosophical ideas to better elucidate the film's core themes.

KENNY: For instance, we watched a film by Bernardo Bertolucci titled *The Conformist* - a 1970s Italian political thriller about a member of Mussolini's fascist regime ordered to assassinate his former philosophy professor.

KEITH: At the time, the movie really spoke to us. Bertolucci equates the fascists with Plato's prisoners of the cave, suggesting that they are blinded by fake ideologies fuelled by personal insecurities.

KENNY: Considering the political climate today, sadly this is an issue that still plagues us, which is why we wanted to make a film like *Judas And The Black Messiah*.

KEITH: We wanted to examine J Edgar Hoover and the G-Men of the sixties who were fascists blinded by fake ideologies fuelled by Hoover's personal insecurities.

KENNY: Insecurities that unfortunately led to the deaths of many young black people such as Fred Hampton.

KEITH: And it was at TCNJ where we first learned about him in a class taught by Professor Chris Fisher.

KENNY: Hence, if it wasn't for studying at TCNJ, we would have never come up with the Oscar-winning film that we needed to finally get into Phi Beta Kappa.

KEITH: Full circle.

KENNY: But all jokes aside, It's imperative you take what you've learned here and apply it in your future endeavors.

KEITH: We took the education that we gained here and we used it to force the country to have a conversation about this abhorrent tragedy.

KENNY: To the point where Congresspeople (no twins of course) watched the movie and it inspired them to reinvestigate the case, calling for the FBI to remove Hoover's name from their Federal headquarters.

KEITH: We don't think they'll do it. But at least we made them think about it. Ideas have power. You have ideas. Therefore, you have power. That's an Aristotelian syllogism.

KENNY: The tools and the ideas developed at TCNJ will have a lasting impact on your journey. And these tools can help you shape the world.

KEITH: We are living proof of the value of a TCNJ degree. Well, we are, and the student loans that we owe.

KENNY: We'd like to leave you with two quotes from Ralph Waldo Emerson:

“This is my wish for you: Comfort on difficult days, smiles when sadness intrudes, rainbows to follow the clouds, laughter to kiss your lips, sunsets to warm your heart, hugs when spirits sag, beauty for your eyes to see, friendships to brighten your being, faith so that you can believe, confidence for when you doubt, courage to know yourself, patience to accept the truth, Love to complete your life.”

KEITH: Second Quote: “Hey, hey, hey, smoke weed every day...” It's legal now.

KENNY: No, but seriously, here's the final quote from Emerson:

KEITH: “Dare to live the life you have dreamed for yourself. Go forward and make your dreams come true.”

KENNY & KEITH: Thank you!