



North
Cross
School

For Immediate Release

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Packing Someone Else's Parachute

ROANOKE, VA (February 6, 2013)—Having graduated from three schools with Honor Codes at their core, local attorney John Johnson '83 spoke to North Cross Students today about why character and integrity matter.

“Why Bother?” was the title of Johnson’s address and students listened carefully as he talked about his personal experiences at North Cross School, VMI, Washington & Lee, in the Army, and as an attorney to illustrate his points. “Being honest is based on respect for yourself and respect for others,” he told students. “We value the truth and we rely on others to be truthful. There are no degrees of honor. Either you lie, or you don’t lie. Either you steal, or you don’t steal. Either you cheat, or you don’t cheat.”

Johnson said that at his colleges, VMI and W&L, violations of the schools’ student-enforced honor code carried single sanction penalties—that meant immediate dismissal from school. At VMI, a dismissed cadet leaves immediately, cannot say any goodbyes, and their name is erased and never spoken of again. Having started at North Cross School under an honor code, each step up in his education and career was built on the lessons he learned early in life.

Johnson stressed, “When you are honest, and others around you live honestly, you can tell each other things and help one another. Sometimes telling the truth is one of the hardest things you can do. But it is worth it, and easier, in the long run, than lying and having to keep on lying to cover up something. And remember, liars are remembered for their lies.”

Johnson told students about having to jump from a plane when he was in the Army, and how shaken he was to do his first 10,000 foot jump. Before the jump he was taken to the place where parachutes were packed, and he met the sergeant who was packing his ‘chute’. “The sergeant had a reputation for doing his very best, and everybody knew how serious he was about his job. Even though I was still nervous, it was good to know the

guy who packed my parachute that day. Remember, every day you are packing someone else's parachute and they are relying on you to pack theirs.”

Johnson's address is part of an ongoing Leadership series at North Cross School. Past and future speakers are talking to students about the importance of character, integrity, honor, leadership, and service to others. The school stresses these as part of the academic experience, and lives under the Honor Code, “I will not lie. I will not steal. I will not cheat.”

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About John C. Johnson

Mr. Johnson has extensive experience in catastrophic injury claims, medical issues, and representing local government entities and municipal authorities in all phases of litigation throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. His practice is concentrated in the defense of civil actions in state and federal court, and the representation of self-insured employers and local governments in matters before the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission. In addition he has argued cases before the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, the Court of Appeals of Virginia, and the Supreme Court of Virginia. Mr. Johnson is a frequent speaker to professional groups on workplace issues, workers compensation, and the interplay between state and federal laws and regulations in the employment arena. His mother, Shirley, taught at North Cross School for 22 years, and his wife, Gwyn, also graduated from North Cross School.

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About North Cross School

North Cross School is a college-preparatory day school grounded in a strong liberal arts and science curriculum combined with exceptional co-curricular programs. The academic program, from junior kindergarten through twelfth grade, prepares students to become responsible, successful citizens by encouraging them to explore their interests and develop their talents. The School is located at 4254 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA, 24018. For more information, visit www.northcross.org.