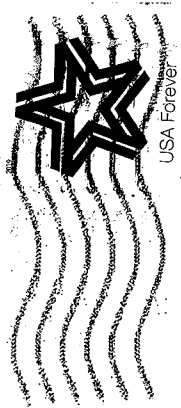


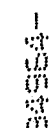
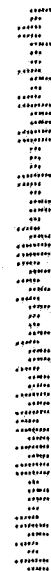
Steve Brooks K-14234
San Quentin State Prison
A-N-39 UP
San Quentin, CA 94964



SAN FRANCISCO CA 94109

08 MAY 2000 PM 3:1

Prison University Project
P.O. Box 492
San Quentin, CA 94964



Steve Brooks K-16234
SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON
4-N-39UP

To all Teachers/Volunteers:

On behalf of myself, the students, and the first graduating class of Mt. Tamalpais College, thank you. Thank you for remembering those who lay helplessly trapped behind these prison walls during this history making coronavirus pandemic. You are our heroes and inspiration. America would not be so great without its schools and its teachers. You make an educational experience possible for us and we are truly grateful. I personally feel it's time you all get the recognition you deserve. If you want to "make America great again "you must invest in schools and teachers. Just know that while some of you are chanting "free them all" some of us are chanting "pay them all what they're worth ."

Steve Brooks
Mt. Tamalpais Class of 2020

"We Will Rise From Corona's Ashes"

No matter which high school, college, or university you may be graduating from this year, the class of 2020 will always be remembered because of this coronavirus pandemic. We will be remembered because of the unprecedented number of schools that were closed; for the schools that were turned into makeshift hospitals and morgues. We will be remembered because the vast majority of learners have been shut out of the global educational system. We will be remembered for the hundreds of teachers that were lost and all the countless essential workers, ,doctors, nurses, and first responders who put their lives at risk to keep us all safe. We will also be remembered because when this is all said and done, how we rose from Corona's ashes.

After this is over we will not be able to return to the status quo. Ideally we won't return to a "one size fits all" model of education. Schools across the country are in danger of closing-not only due to coronavirus-but lack of innovation. Our educators and students can take this opportunity to create a better public school system; one that decreases the digital divide between rich and poor children. We can create new, innovative ways to provide the same food, childcare services, social interaction, and emotional support schools and teachers traditionally provide. We have an opportunity to create new spaces and use online and remote learning, to get marginalized students caught up on the use of technology in an attempt to level the playing field.

This time of uncertainty is an opportunity to fuel the "prison to school pipeline", to allow incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people to thrive through education; where they can be empowered to be productive, taxpaying members of society. Now is a perfect time to make quality education open and affordable for all.

I personally see it as my mission to help save lives by spreading the gospel of education. When I am released back into society I want to help inspire marginalized people and empower them to see how they too shape the world. I want to help not only inspire and empower but recruit the formerly incarcerated into college because they have an untapped ability to change society. Additionally, we know that education is an indicator of reduced recidivism.

Our government has spent a lot of money to keep us socially distant and sheltered in place; to keep us wearing masks and living in fear; all for the sake of saving lives. I believe we could also be spending the same amount of time, money, and effort for the sake of saving millions of lives from suffering the mental apathy caused by the lack of access to quality education. This apathy sometimes leads to a physical death and it increases the rate of addiction and crime.

So that's how I believe we could all rise from Corona's ashes. By improving America's educational system, by pandemic proofing it. By allowing all people access to quality and affordable education. By paying teachers what they deserve and using the untapped potential of marginalized people to help create a better safer society.

Steve Brooks
"Class of 2020"

*You may make this available on the website if you wish.